TRIBEBOOK: Ukcena™

Of Dreams and Beasts

The dream took her under dark waters again. It had happened every night for what seemed like forever, once she was awake. Erishka Derr knew how to swim, had spent the occasional summer day splashing in the Gulf of Mexico, where the azure water moved quietly against the shore. But this dream wasn't one to remember with pleasure. The sea around her felt cold, not sun drenched. And... things surrounded her. Tall pillars made from crushed shell, though Erishka didn't understand how she knew that. Fins of invisible flesh touched her water-wrinkled skin, making her shiver in dread. And worst of all, the shadow without a form, an impossible animal of some kind: a silhouette with a long, lashing tail and a fanged maw. Each night, its voice became clearer through the frothing waters.

"Uktena's children are of the streams, of the rivers. They cover the earth and wash the faces of humans with ebony tears. Find what was lost, and return it to me, along with the secret that you cannot see."

The dream almost always ended the same way, with the long tail whipping around to strike her before she could dodge. She woke drenched in sweat, the hair on her arms becoming longer with the rising of the moon.

Erishka's Notebook

I killed my first enemy today. One of the pack leaders asked me to help him patrol the area near the caern, the bawn he called it, and I was eager to see the land, so I said yes. We were walking around the bawn when a monster burst through from the shadow world. It looked like a cross between a giant cricket and a fanged gecko. I thought I'd be more afraid, but maybe my instincts are better than I know. I felt my body change as it did before, and my heart burned with hatred for this creature. Later, as we rested, the pack leader gave his approval. He didn't say much, but I could tell he was pleased. I've learned a lot since coming here—about the many tribes, the auspices and even the Wyrm, the Weaver and the Wyld. Today I learned I could fight and win.

Erishka suppressed the urge to bounce around with excitement. Scarce a month had passed since she'd gone through what Grandmother called First Change. Fifteen years of life hadn't prepared the young half-Choctaw for anything like that. How come everybody seemed so sober most of the time? Erishka's heart swelled with joy, and she wished her mother could have lived to see her. Grandmother said that her mother had been called Dyes-with-Wyrm-Blood, or at least that's how it roughly translated, but Erishka's grasp of the language sucked, and she couldn't remember the Choctaw woman who'd left a two-year old child with a light-skinned father to return to her own people.

Erishka hadn't understood then how anyone could leave a baby, but now, with the whole Garou story, it made more sense. And it explained why her father, a successful professor of anthropology, had abruptly turned his interests from studying weaving methods of the southeastern Indians to examining rare textiles of Scandinavia. Anything to forget what had happened and distance himself from the inevitable. Work had always distracted him from Erishka. He wasn't cruel or careless, just absent-minded. A series of kindly housekeepers had guarded his energetic daughter until her fourteenth birthday when Grandmother had shown up. Erishka didn't think she was *really* her mother's mother, but she knew enough about Choctaw

folkways to realize it was a perfectly polite way to address an old woman.

Her father had accepted this new guardian with distracted ease, heading off on a yearlong sabbatical, seemingly resigned to the fact that he might or might not see Erishka again. Now, thinking back on it, she realized he must have known all about the werewolves, but he'd never breathed a word of it. Grandmother said her father was from old Creole blood, Kinfolk from many generations ago, and that his indifference was to hide the pain of loss—the loss of a wife and a child who belonged to Gaia, not him.

The only blemishes on her joy were the dreams, terrible nightmares that she hoped she could forget. It was spring when she went to Grandmother to ask about the fear each night brought.

Grandmother was boiling madder root over a fire, breathing in the musky fumes as she dipped long coils of reed into the soupy dyebath. Some women of the Mississippi Choctaw liked the modern chemical dyes, but Grandmother preferred the traditional ones: Brazilwood, alkanet, cochineal. She fixed them with the men's urine and scoffed at the young women who turned up their noses because the rich women with lacquered nails and too much turquoise paid handsomely for her 'all-natural' baskets at the pow-wows. After Erishka had shared the tale, Grandmother stirred.

"I had my eye on you for many years, watching from the shadows," the old woman explained. "Then, when I knew the time was right to tell you our story, I came for you. The roots told me the path, and the corn's rustling led me along."

"But how did you *know*? And what should I do about these dreams?" persisted the girl, unable to understand what the old woman really meant. Grandmother shrugged and wouldn't answer for a long time. Finally, she spoke, moving away from the past and into the future.

"You have work to do, granddaughter. You think it is all weaving baskets and chasing swamp rabbits on four legs? Dancing at the gatherings and clawing the enemy? You earn your keep."

"I don't mind hard work," Erishka retorted. "What do you want me to do? Where do I begin?"

Grandmother kept stirring. "Part of becoming one of us is the unraveling of mysteries. Start where the vision leads you. Water is life. Begin there."

So Erishka found herself bumming a ride with some of the locals on the rez down to the bay, a couple of hours away. They went for shrimp and fish; she traveled for the sake of unlocking the mystery preying on her mind.

The waters in the bay were calm that day; no distant waterspouts or impending storms loomed on the horizon. When the others went off to fish, she dug her feet in the warm sand. For now, it was pleasant. In a couple of months, she knew, the heat would be roasting. Lying back, Erishka stared up at the sky and waited. She had no idea if or when she'd get "inspired," but if this was how it was supposed to happen, then so be it.

Hours passed. Erishka sweated; the sun was hotter than it should have been for springtime. She lay down on her back, squinting into the bright light. The rush and retreat of the waves on the fine sand reminded her of slow breaths, and hers instinctively slowed as well. The heat raised salty droplets on her skin, salty as the ocean, whose surface gave no hint as the secrets it held in its black, lung-crushing depths. Her mind pulled away, floating like driftwood on the sea, and she lost herself in the heat and the heartbeat of the gulf.

A winged shadow fell across her face. Erishka heard the frantic beating of feathers as a large pelican crashed to the earth near her feet. She recoiled, for it smelled of long-dead fish and rancid waters. With its long bill tucked against neck and body, it appeared to be mouthless, staring at her with two unblinking eyes. It croaked at her, and she heard words in the sound.

"The plume of my distant kin lies long forgotten. The quill must be broken, the spirit made free. Find it where the humans watch it, day after day, wondering at its age, knowing not what it means." The bird flew away, leaving Erishka staring after it in wonder.

Cold water dowsed the girl. Looking up, the hot sun was cooling against the waters of the bay, and the tide was capturing ground in a series of rushes. Hours had passed, and farther down the shore, she heard the calls of the Kin, finished with their work for the day.

All during the ride home, the young werewolf pondered the pelican's message. Somewhere, she surmised, there was a bird feather that contained a spirit, a talen. She had to find it and snap the quill to release a trapped spirit—that all made sense. But where was the thing? And what kind of bird feather was she searching for? It was like looking for a single shell on an endless shore. The clue had to be in the part about humans looking at it, maybe trying to study it... Then, a thought came to Erishka. Wasn't this the same sort of thing her human father had done? Taken relics from ancient cultures and scrutinized them in extreme detail? Puzzled out their origins and purpose? If that were so, she knew just where to begin her search.

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Erishka went the next day to the state university museum, which was in her hometown. It wasn't a huge school, but the museum had a few impressive collections. Some had been donations, but she knew that others had been taken without permission, from Choctaw, Creek and a number of other nations. After wandering around for an hour, she was ready to admit defeat. Nothing on display even remotely seemed to fit the pelican's description. Then, she caught sight of some students from the archaeology department; a few looked familiar, but she couldn't call them by name. They headed into the back of the museum, towards the lab. *Could they have it back there, not on display?* she wondered. *Maybe it's worth checking out later tonight.*

Killing time until the moon rose was easy. Erishka had forgotten the simple pleasures of walking around campus, checking out new books in the library, seeing people her own age without the extra burdens she'd been given. But she felt nervous, anxious and on edge, all at once, as the day turned into night. An almost palpable relief washed over her when she saw the moon, her moon, already well above the horizon. Creeping behind one of the buildings, the young werewolf crouched a moment in the darkest pool of shadow she could find. Fingering a small square of hide from a water moccasin, she began her

whispered prayer for Great Uktena's favor in tonight's hunt, "Great Uktena, Breaker of Secrets, Searcher in the Dark Places... " It was a ritual Grandmother taught her, imploring the tribe's totem spirit to aid her search for lore; it was a ritual that up until now she'd never needed. Now she cast about until she found a puddle left over from yesterday's shower. The half-faced moon glittered in the water's shallow surface, and with her mind focused, Erishka let herself fall into the reflection. Icy cold swallowed her from foot to shoulder to head, but as she tumbled to the ground, she felt the physical world pass away and the land of the spirits open before her.

The landscape was much changed. Where the newest buildings stood, there was nothing but the afterimages of pines, now empty of animal spirits. The older structures seemed solid enough, though recent renovations had not yet left an impact on their spiritual counterparts. The moon seemed brighter, larger, and the world was drenched in the silvery light. She marveled at the eerie stillness of a campus devoid of students. Indeed, she saw far fewer spirits than were found at the caern. Some electricity spirits flashed around light poles or flickered dimly through underground cables. A small antlike spirit bounced through the air — no doubt secure in its PDA nest in someone's backpack. But all was generally quiet at this hour of the spiritual night.

The museum retained its physical shape, but to her vision, it was constructed of threads, some thick, some gossamer. Walking to the wall, she tested the strength of the strands, then took on her war form, reared back and slashed at the weakest ones. They gave way easily, but as she reached through to pull herself inside the structure, her arm went numb. She tried to withdraw, but her limb was held fast by a thousand micro-strands of webbing. Growling in frustration, she ripped at the web wall with a leg, only to feel another spray of webbing sink into her foot, trapping it a moment before she jerked it free.

Movement writhed in the darkness beyond. Erishka reached forward, grabbed, and yanked a startled, metallic spider-like spirit to her. With a roar, she stretched down and began biting legs, even as the spirit snapped at her. It nipped at her with sharp mandibles until she lost her grip and dropped it. With another hard pull, she wrenched her arm free of the webbing, and turned again to deal with the pattern spider flopping around on its two remaining legs. A series of brutal slashes, and the spirit lay broken and inert, the light in its eyes fading to darkness. Stomping her feet, she felt the numbness replaced by a throbbing ache. More time passed before she could fully close her hand.

Ignoring the pain in her limbs, Erishka moved forward, past the thin webs covering the building. *Something's here!* she

thought, feeling a tingle at the base of her spine. Ahead, past the dim splashes of light coming from the display cases, she saw a brighter light emanating from the lab. Moving closer, she spotted flashing brief sparks against the moonlit landscape, in shades of crimson and azure. The source of the light was a strange object resting on a worktable. She pushed through the wall between the world — colder, thicker now — and settled into the quiet, dim lab room. Drawers and trays lay neatly side-by-side on the workbenches, with many more in cabinets lining the walls. She looked down on a tray with feathers, bird skulls, and leg bones, but she knew which object she was here for.

That it was a big feather was readily apparent, but it seemed covered by a black mesh. It took the young werewolf a few moments to realize what it was—a thick-quilled turkey tail feather woven with the coarse hairs of the bird's beard. Erishka had seen wild male turkeys a few times. They were a cross between comical and stately, with their large brown and white feathers on display, combined with the waggling purplish heads and the tufty beards that hung from their chests. But this object was different—not only was it the remains of a living creature, it was the vessel for a spirit. Faintly twining around the quill were tiny glyphs, Garou glyphs, in dark ink. She carefully plucked the fetish from the table, barely noting the museum ID tag that dangled from the feather by a cotton string; tomorrow it would be relegated to a list of lost artifacts by museum staff.

The Uktena flicked on a row of overhead lights and looked around the bright room for a reflection. In the end, she had to settle for the reflection in the dusty glass of a cabinet face. Even with the reflection, it took her longer to squeeze through the cold, suffocating barrier than she cared for. Yet her troubles weren't over, for where she pushed through the webbing of the Penumbral wall, two more spiderlike Weaver spirits were mending the tear. At least a pair of the spirit's eyes fixed on her as she approached. Erishka had no desire to fight two pattern spiders at once, so she cast her eyes about the display hall. Above her, an electricity spirit wiggled in a spotlight like a tadpole in a pool. In the tongue of the spirits, she hailed the arcing blue electricity spirit. Though it continued to turn and thrash, the sharp smell of ozone told the Half-Moon that for better or worse she had its attention. "I ask a favor of you. Drive off those two spirits," she continued, pointing at the wall. "It will be a funny prank, won't it, to see them jump?" The bulb sparked at the thought of mischief — or perhaps with anger at the impertinent request. "And for this little joke, I pledge that no light in my Grandmother's house will dim for a full phase of the moon." *She'll understand the chiminage*, she thought. *I hope she'll understand her electric bill.*

The electric tadpole slowed its mad revolutions, then vanished from its haven. An instant later, it arced from a wall socket, dancing between the spiders and making them skitter away, disappearing in a terminal at the other end of the hall. The electric spirit threw a spark at the werewolf's foot before flashing into the socket. As the unpleasant tingle faded from her leg, Erishka thought how pleased with itself the little spirit looked.

Tearing through the half-repaired wall, she stepped out again into the penumbral night. Hesitating only a moment, she picked up the quill and with a swift motion, snapped it in two.

A misty form poured from the broken quill, and a few seconds later, a large male turkey preened and gobbled before her, the faint azure light still clinging to its leathery head. The spirit seemed quite animated, maybe even pleased, and as it spread its wings, it pecked at the remains of the talen she'd let fall to the ground. The quill itself disappeared, but the stiff hairs remained. The turkey pushed them towards her with its beak, and then turned and flew away. Thoughtfully, Erishka bent and touched the beard, surprised to find it quite solid. She remained a few moments, then found her way back to the waking world.

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"And the turkey left these beard feathers," she finished, hoping her elder would tell her precisely what had happened.

Grandmother was stirring yet another batch of natural dyestuff. "The spirit made you a gift. He was grateful to be freed. The question now is what are you going to do with the gift?"

Erishka shrugged. "I don't know. Perhaps there's a sept that reveres Turkey as their totem. Maybe finding them is a good place to start."

Grandmother nodded as she put down her stick. "Perhaps. Maybe you can do two tasks at once. The sept leader wishes you to escort a Kinfolk who has messages for the tribe. There are many places to go and many people to see. Kin normally cannot go into our sacred places, but with you at his side, he will be allowed. We have money, and you will use it to travel in this world, not the other. Time enough for that later. Besides, it isn't possible for Kin to see the shadow lands the way we can." She stirred some more and then added, "And you can seek your answers about the spirit's message. You leave at dawn. Go make ready."

Erishka shrugged. This could be fun. She'd half expected to be sent on some kind of sacred quest or at least undergo a sort of puberty ceremony, like some of the Indians she'd read about in her father's books. Maybe for werewolves passing through their First Change was all the sort of ritual they needed, as opposed to spending so many moons mixing clay for a sacred pot or whatever. This wasn't going to be so hard after all.

Erishka's Notebook

Today I leave with the Kinfolk, and I'm supposed to be his bodyguard while he travels to see a bunch of other werewolves. Grandmother won't tell me many details, but said that he needed my help and protection. I don't really know that much about being a member of the tribe. They tell me I am of a werewolf tribe called Uktena, and I think that has something to do with a water monster. Actually, no one here has told me anything more about what Uktena is like. Dad had a book by some old dead ethnographer, and the Uktena was a big snake with a rock in its forehead. But that's all I remember. Maybe there's not that much to know. I can change shape easily now, and I've spent some time at the sacred caern and in the otherworld. I know the names of the sept members and which moon face they serve. I think I remember all the tribe names, though there are a couple that seem really similar. Possibly this Kinfolk guy knows something, and he can tell me more about the tribes, both the others and my own.

I had a dream before dawn. A shroud of fog hung over my eyes, and when I reached up to part it, my hand came away wet with dew. In the distance I heard a waterfall, and someone was throwing heavy

stones in the pool. It sounded like the gulping of an animal dying of thirst. The mist remained before my eyes.

I see Grandmother coming with the man. He's a lot older than me, maybe in his thirties. Looks Indian, sure enough, stocky, with a bit of a belly and long hair. He's got horned-rim glasses, so I bet they're government issue from the BIH. More later.

Erishka had packed her knapsack the night before, so she was ready when Grandmother called for her to come out to meet the Kinfolk man.

"Hey," he said, waving a hand in the air.

"Hey," answered Erishka, not sure if she should do anything else. Did this guy want to shake hands? She settled for doing nothing. "You ready to go?"

"Sure am. You can call me Jolon." He bent and hefted his backpack.

"Is that a Choctaw name?" asked Erishka.

He laughed a bit. "Nah, I sort of come from all over. Right, Grandmother?"

The old woman nodded, and then she did a strange thing. She laid a hand on Erishka's brow and brushed back her dark brown hair. Then the moment passed, and the old woman's hand fell to her side. Grandmother said something in Choctaw, which Erishka could hardly speak; maybe it was some kind of farewell. Then Jolon turned and started walking. Erishka followed him, skipping a bit to catch up. He had long legs, like a grasshopper.

"Wait, where are we going?" asked Erishka. "You can't mean we're walking everywhere."

"No, I don't think so," her companion replied. He handed her two tickets from the pocket of his jeans. "Guess we start by making it to the bus station. It's just a couple of miles."

Weird, thought Erishka. *Pretty funny for a werewolf to ride a bus. Oh well.* "What's our first stop?" she asked aloud.

"To the east, a place some call the armpit of Florida. Others refer to it as the panhandle. Got to drop off some packages there, the kind that don't travel well on FedEx. We should get there in about 15 hours or so." He shifted his pack a bit as they walked. "Ever been to Florida?"

"Nah. I stayed around southern Mississippi for the most part. Always thought I'd maybe get a job at one of the casinos or something, you know?"

Jolon shrugged. "Lots of folks think that way. Guess your world got changed a lot, eh?"

"I didn't mind," Erishka added quickly. "I mean, this is just so damn cool. I took to it all pretty quick, so Grandmother said. I can't see why some find it so difficult. I mean, take this other kid Scott, he came to the sept about the same time I did. Wigged out! Didn't want to have anything to do with the sept or the tribe. Thought it was all horseshit. Couple of the elders took him off to have a talk, and I reckon he worked it out. Last time I saw him, he seemed to be getting into it more."

The Kinfolk seemed to mull on that a bit. "Well, maybe you're just lucky. Or special. You'll find out in time."

They walked the remaining mile in silence, the only sound that of their feet squishing fallen magnolia leaves. The edge of town wasn't much, just a few gas stations and fast food joints, plus the Greyhound station. They found a seat on a hard wooden bench and bought a couple of sodas to pass the time. Presently, the almost empty bus pulled up; Jolon waited until the last call before nodding to Erishka to get on board. The seats smelled like industrial strength chemical cleaner, and she shuddered a bit. It just didn't feel right to her to travel this way. But then she remembered that Kin couldn't travel the spirit paths, and she sure couldn't drive a car, at least not legally. So much for options.

Her companion gulped greedily from his large water bottle, then settled in his seat and closed his eyes. "Might as well get some rest. We got plenty of time."

Erishka wanted to write in her notebook, but nothing came to mind. Maybe if she slept, another dream would arrive and tell her more about the Uktena. She liked writing, but when the mood wasn't on her, she couldn't produce something from nothing. So she waited. The writing would come soon; she felt it in her fingers.

Glancing at Jolon, she saw he was already snoring. His glasses glittered in the sun filtering through the tinted windows. Erishka squinted; the reflected light hurt her eyes. She turned on her side, laying the seat back, and tried to dream.

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Erishka drowsed as the bus gently rocked coastward. Her mind drifted over the other werewolves in the sept; some she knew by their birth names, but away from normal humans everyone used their Garou names. The Uktena who before her Change she knew by the uninspired moniker of Rufus Chickaway, now she greeted as Thunder-Backs-Down. Birth names said nothing about you, just about your parents. Deed names meant something — they spoke about what you'd done, who you are. When she asked Grandmother when she'd get a deed name, the old Moondancer paused in her work, and without looking up, cryptically replied, "It won't be the last thing you do." Then she changed the subject, and no amount of prodding would make her say more. Such an odd thing to be secretive about — unless it truly had more significance than she knew. *When will I get a Garou name?* her dreaming mind wondered.

Soon, if you are worthy and wise enough to claim it, a low voice rumbled in reply.

"What!?" she cried as she started awake. The bus rocked as it turned off the highway. The last of the sun's rays were burning their slow goodnight dance on a thunderhead she saw through her window.

Leaning over, Jolon raised his voice above the hubbub of the groaning bus and now-animated passengers. "I said, 'There's a burger and fries in this town with my name on it.' Or a fish sandwich and onion rings will do. My stomach's about to eat itself. You buying?"

TRIBEBOOK:

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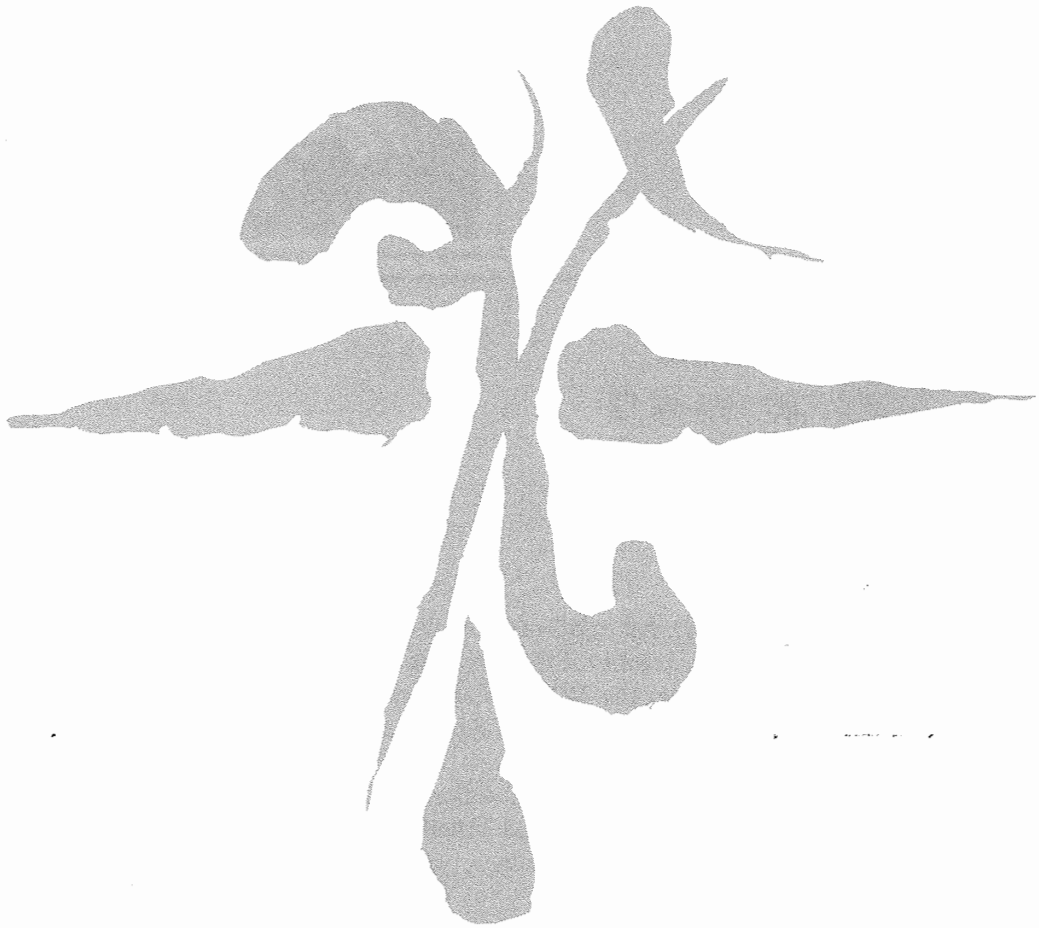

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"History" and "Myth" and "Identity" are not three separate matters, here, but three aspects of one human being.
— Carter Revard

Erishka's Notebook

We arrived after changing buses and seats three times. It's a swampy place, a dying little town with lots of fast food, discount stores and pawnshops. The air is oppressive, and seems like every few minutes, a bunch of fighter jets roar overhead. There's no peace here, so I can't imagine why werewolves would remain. Jolon seemed to expect someone would meet us, but no one's come yet. Guess we'll find out sooner than later if he's right. So I guess this is my first taste of other kinds of Uktena. Hope I can manage to find a way to fit in. More to come...

... Sure enough, a Hispanic-looking guy picked us up at the bus station and drove a couple of hours down crushed-shell roads until we got to the sept. The older folks were very polite, especially the Crescent Moons. There were some folks who weren't Uktena, I think, but I didn't really talk with anybody else. They were having a test for rank for a Gibbous Moon, and Jolon and I were invited to watch. We had to purify ourselves first, which amounted to some smudging and bathing in the creek. Jolon said he was shy, so he went upstream out of sight. The air was hot and still, and even the coffee-dark water was tepid. I don't know how to describe it, but the stillness seemed to settle into me, and I stopped thinking and just sort of floated for a while. I got out when I heard Jolon thrashing through the palmettos. We were directed into a large raised hut just before sundown (and just before the skeeters really got nasty).

A guard blocked the door but someone yelled for him to let us in, so he jumped out of the way, and we went in and sat against the wall. There were seven folks sitting around the fire. They all looked like pretty important Uktena. They didn't talk much, just sat and waited. I noticed one or two looking at Jolon and me while pretending to look somewhere else. Maybe they don't get too many Kinfolk watching Uktena business. And then this guy a little older than me came in and sat down in the circle....

Elder's Admonition

Death-on-the-Leaves, Uktena Elder, makes a suggestion:

Young one, it would be wise of you to learn more about the Kin of the Uktena you question. A Garou carries many of the beliefs and outlooks of his birth-people, and knowing what to say and what not to say can make the difference between a warm reception and a cool one. Also remember that the tribal names taught in school are almost always given to the nations by others — usually enemies. You said you are visiting a mountain caern next? An Uktena elder there probably won't mind being called a Cherokee, but referring to his parent nation as *Ani'yun'wiya* or *Tsalagi* will impress him, first because you show you've paid attention, and second that you show respect in using the old terms. Likewise, when you meet a Navajo, referring to her as a *Diné* will show the proper respect. Make sure, of course, that she really is *Diné*, for there are many nations there and your attempt at respect may be seen as a slight.

After a few moments of silence, Tide-Borne, the eldest among them, asked the newcomer, "Why are we gathered here, young one?"

The newcomer answered, "I am Cows-the-Gator, and you have come to hear my story."

"A story? Why not a song?" asked Mocker Hunter, beautiful save for the ragged scar which took her left eye.

"Because songs are for the spirits. My words are to teach my people."

Tide-Borne nodded approvingly. "We have a young Half-Moon among us who needs to learn of our people. Tell us, then, the history of our tribe."

The young storyteller spoke to the group, but looked at Erishka. "I am going to tell you about our tribe. Your tribe. Outsiders know some of what I tell you, but a few things are secrets. I leave it to you to guess which must never be spoken outside our circle." His eyes focused on empty space and all was still. After a few moments, Cows-the-Gator raised his arms wide, then brought them down to his side, and spoke.

The Long Ago Times

"They say the Wolf-People are very old, almost as old as the world. That may be true, but I think they came into being when Gaia's three children — Grandfathers Smoke, Spider, and Serpent — lost their way and the world fell out of harmony. Why else would the Great Mother need warriors? In those days, we roamed on four legs more than on two, for the wolf was stronger than the human. Both sides were dear to us, for both were curious and cunning. Yet human curiosity was especially intriguing, for they searched for more besides food and shelter. Wolves search for these things, and when something is unknown they try to recognize it as food or threat. If it isn't in either of these categories, it is irrelevant. Humans wanted to know more; they wanted to *understand*. They had the power of insight, which grew stronger as their instincts weakened. Some among them became aware of the spirit world, and sought out its secrets. These humans we claimed as Kinfolk. We taught our Kin how to live in harmony with the world, and how to honor the spirits in their own way.

"In the long-ago time of the Wolf-People, three brothers were born. The eldest was the wisest, and would think swiftly and then act. The youngest was brave and brash, and would always act swiftly and then think. The middle brother would think slowly, but once his mind was made up he never turned from his decision. When the Wolf-Peoples settled on their territories, the three brothers moved eastward away from the others."

Uktena Joins Us

"It was in those days, after the first journey to our early hunting grounds and the journey to the Pure Lands, that the brothers gained the favor of the spirits. Younger Brother fought Wendigo, earning his patronage. Middle Brother impressed Turtle with his unyielding will and stamina. And Older Brother used his wisdom to defeat Great Uktena, who agreed to become his totem. And so began the three great tribes, who thrived—"

A Note about Uktena Histories

Most of the traditional tellings of earliest Uktena history focus on the Three Brothers. Younger storytellers who have been exposed to more anthropologic versions of history often incorporate some of those views into the early parts of the story. Having learned from various sources, Cows-the-Gator goes back and forth between *we* (the tribe) and *Older Brother*, whichever best serves his tale — or in some cases, what is deemed proper for that version of the story. Further, some Uktena — like Cows-the-Gator — will tell stories in a way that isn't necessarily linear. To listeners used to organizing strictly by dates, telling stories thematically without a strict temporal context may be disconcerting. But this storyteller doesn't want to leave a story thread hanging loose.

It also bears noting that different versions of a given story may vary or even conflict. This doesn't necessarily bother the tellers, for each version has something to teach. When Galliards gather at Great Councils, they may spend the whole night retelling the same story and collectively adding to the knowledge. Of course, a version is worth more if it has a renowned lineage, and the teller often makes a point of learning who taught it to her teacher. Some stories of impressive descent are jealously guarded; the listener is not allowed to retell that particular version of the story without express permission from the current "owner" of the story.

"Wait!" growled Burning-Howls, shaking his hairless head. "That's no way to tell the story of our guiding spirit! Why don't you tell it properly?"

Cows-the-Gator would not fall for the tricks of the clever metis. "Because one should not tell such tales outside of the proper times and places, for it may make the place or spirit angry." He was rewarded with the slight smile from Howls, and grunts of approval from the circle.

"That is wise," agreed Tide-Borne quietly. "But I think that at this place and in this time the spirit will not be offended." Gator nodded, and after a moment he continued.

"The Three Brothers and their people were fine hunters and lived well in the old lands until one year hunting grew hard. Though winter had been mild and the rains plentiful, the deer and other quarry grew scarce. One day Younger Brother was hunting when he saw a great water snake rise from the lake. It was as big around as a tree and had antlers and a large clear stone on its head. It opened its mouth and made the sound of a deer, and soon a deer came running up and hopped into the monster's open mouth. Then it sank back into the water. Younger Brother said, 'This serpent is eating all the game; we will grow hungry. Hai! I will kill this monster.' And so Younger Brother waited by the lake for a day and a night, until the serpent again rose from the dark waters. As it opened its mouth to call another deer, the warrior leaped down the hill and with a war cry, he threw his spear. The point could pin a bear to a tree, but it shattered against the monster's red scales. So he clawed at his foe, but again his mighty claws drew no blood but only flint-sparks from the beast. Then the creature slithered back into the lake. Defeated, Younger Brother vowed to make a greater spear to wound the foe. But when he returned home, he found his mate had drowned, and his grief was so great that he forgot all about the game-slayer.

"Days went on and game grew scarce. Middle Brother said, 'My people grow hungry. I must find what is wrong.' So he went hunting, and when he passed by the lake he saw the serpent rise and crawl into the forest, pushing trees over with its bulk. After following it awhile he saw it eat a deer. He ran before it and said, 'You have been eating all the deer. Leave or I will kill you!' The creature hissed a laugh and said, 'The deer are too few now anyway. There are better things to eat,' and slithered away. Middle Brother went home to tell his brothers what he had seen, but discovered his son had fallen and died, and his grief was so great he too forgot to tell anyone about the monster.

"In the following days, some hunters did not return home. Older Brother went to investigate, and found that each hunter had dropped his spear and run to where a giant snake lay. Each time, the track of the snake left the scene, but the man's did not. Older Brother said, 'The serpent is not content with game; now he eats our people.' But he did not go to meet the serpent, not for some time. Instead he tracked the monster from a distance, seeing where he went and when he moved. He saw the tracks of those it devoured. And he spoke with every spirit he passed and asked what they

knew about the creature that killed on sight, but none knew anything. Then he asked Raven, who said the monster was the Uktena, whose anger was so great that any he looked upon would lose their loved ones. But Raven did not know how to kill the Uktena. Then he asked Owl, who said he saw a man attack Uktena for eating his son, and the great jewel in Uktena's head blazed brighter than lightning and then the man walked into Uktena's mouth; Owl did not think the water serpent could be killed. Still Older Brother kept searching. Finally, he spoke to Spider, whose web lay beside the Uktena's trail. 'I do not know this Uktena,' she said, 'but I saw a great wall pass me as the sky grew bright. It nearly crushed my web, otherwise I would not care. It had scales like a giant snake, and many great colored spots.' The Garou asked what else Spider remembered, and after thinking a while she said, 'When it approached I heard it hiss like a great wind. Then I heard it scrape the ground as it passed. And I heard a great pounding. Then more scraping, and then it was gone.' Older Brother asked, 'When did you hear the pounding?' and Spider thought a while and said, 'When the seventh spot passed.' Older Brother thanked Spider, and followed the monster's trail until he reached a mountain.

On top of the mountain, Uktena coiled and hissed. The Garou waited until evening, when Uktena fell asleep. Then he slipped up to the top of the mountain. He touched his spear to a scale on the seventh spot and said, 'Hai! I know where your heart is and I can kill you! Never hunt my people again or I will tell them how and they will slay you!' Uktena let out a hiss that blew down three trees, and said, 'Warrior, you are brave, for you risked those you love to see me. And you are clever, for you found out how to take my life. Yet you are honorable, for you did not kill me in my sleep. A bargain I will make with you: Teach your people not to kill, but to honor me, and I will guide them and teach them mighty and terrible secrets, so that they may become the wisest of peoples.' And Older Brother thought on this awhile, and finally agreed. 'How may we honor you?' he asked, and Great Uktena answered, 'By searching all the worlds for what is hidden, and what is forgotten, and what is not yet discovered. Learn all these things and you will also find where the evil spirits hide and know them when you meet them.' And so Older Brother returned home and told his people all these things, and this is how they became the People of Uktena."

To New Lands

"And so we thrived on vast plains and forests, sometimes living in the shadow of the ice wall that crushed earth and tree and bone, then drew back to let us see its devastation. Our two-legged Kin grew cleverer. Their stone tools and their drawings and their words grew ever more complex, as did their minds. Those we cherished enough to call our mates we taught wisdom, and the chiefs who heeded their words prospered. They struggled, as all struggle in the world, yet these hunters kept in balance with the land.

"Then other Wolf-people came, from where the sun goes down. They came and slew the hunters, slaying whole bands and leaving their bodies for scavengers. This made no sense to us. If they hunted the hunters, why leave them to rot? Did they wish the territory for their own Kin? Surely there was plenty for all.

"Finally, some among us questioned the strangers. They said they were culling the humans so they wouldn't cover the earth. Their seers said that when the ice retreated and the world warmed then the humans would keep plants and animals within walls so they wouldn't have to hunt; they would multiply and build great structures that never move

A Different Story

Claw-Like-Flint tells a different tale:

There are some elders whose ancestors told them the forgotten tale of how Uktena became our totem. It was long after we claimed the Pure Lands. You see, in the old days of the tribe we claimed Skyhawk as our totem. No, I expect you have never heard of her, for no one has seen her in many generations. Her wings stretched across the sky; she had eyes sharper than any others, even Falcon, and saw everything in the air and on the earth. It was she who led us to the Pure Lands, always guiding our steps toward food and away from dangerous ground.

After Older Brother settled in the desert country, he grew lonely, so he went to look for Middle Brother. He traveled against the sun until he crossed the great river and climbed the green mountains. He did not see Middle Brother; instead, he saw Great Uktena coiled on a mountain, fast asleep. Because the serpent did not see him, he was spared, but Uktena's death magic struck Skyhawk, sending her into such a deep Slumber that to this day none have found her. Older Brother fought Uktena, and as you know, our ancestor won. He demanded that Uktena bring Skyhawk back to life. Great Uktena said he would if Older Brother truly wished it, but then said, "You are wise and skillful. There is much I can offer you. You need only honor me and I will make you wiser."

"I honor Skyhawk," Older Brother replied, "for she can see everything in the sky and on the land."

"Ah, but can she also see the blackest caves? Can she know what happens in the deepest lakes? Can she follow the secret comings and goings when all is dark and not even the moon sends her light across the land? All these things I know. Honor me, and I will make you wise. I will show you where the dark things dwell, and how to root them out. Fight our enemies in my name and all will fear you."

Older Brother was honorable, but he saw the wisdom in such an alliance. And so he did as Great Uktena asked, and we have prospered ever since. But for this power, an honorable spirit was sacrificed. All power comes with a price; always look for the cost before you choose. This is my story, told to me by my Grandfather, and it is old beyond years.

and could withstand wind and water. We told them to do what they wished to those in their territory, and leave our peoples alone. We told them to hunt the monsters as our Mother wished us to do, and not waste time killing humans. For that would put fear into the hearts of the humans, rather than teaching them love for the Mother. But the strangers would not listen. They said they would return and make sure we did as they demanded.

"We would not do as the strangers said. And so we prepared to defend our territory. Yet the Great Mother sent Older Brother a dream of a vast island where game was plentiful. No other Wolf-people lived there, but there were many monsters that needed to be destroyed. 'How will we get to this island?' Older Brother asked in the dream. 'We have no boats!' And Great Mother told him that for the brave the sea was made dry, but soon the sea would swallow the land again so that no one could reach the island.

"Older Brother did not want to risk his siblings, for though the dream seemed to come from the Mother, evil spirits may sometimes send pretty visions. So he traveled many moons, running along the edge of the ice wall until he came to the place between the ice and the sea. Crossing over he scented game, open plains and deep forest. Older Brother returned and told the others of this place. Younger Brother wanted to stay and fight, while Middle Brother couldn't decide. Finally Older Brother convinced him it was the Mother's will, and Younger Brother didn't want to be left behind. So they left their old hunting grounds, taking their favored wolves and human Kin, and they crossed the land between the ice and the sea. And after the last of the tribe crossed, the sea covered up the land bridge so that no one could follow them into their new homeland."

Cleansing of the New World

"The brothers continued their journey, beyond the snow, through great forests. They walked across Turtle Island from the shifting ice to the steaming jungles, from cliffs to long beaches. Younger Brother did not go far before he grew angry at the sun for standing too close. To him the howl of the hungry wind was music, a call to join the dance of death once more. So he left his siblings and returned to the snow. Middle Brother was fond of green growing things, and chose to make his home in the fertile valleys and forests of the East. Older Brother chose the desert, the clean dryness where the shadows stand out sharply in the white burning sun, where the game requires more searching than the plains that groaned under the hooves of the buffalo. He traveled the secret passes of the great mountains, and spoke with the eagles and the cougars. He walked among the wooden giants, silent as the morning sea mist. He plumbed the depths of lakes far below the surface of the earth.

"Though the Brothers occasionally met, they always returned to the land they loved best. But in their wanderings they found many evil spirits. Together and alone, they fought many battles, some with spirits you may yet face, young one; others with monsters not faced since before the days of our grandfathers. There was the great Bane, whom we call Ash-Breath; he could suck all the water—"

"That," interjected Tide-Borne, "is *not* a good story for today."

After a moment getting his derailed story back on track, Cows-the-Gator continued. "But the servants of the Wyrm are many and strong. To die fighting the Wyrm is what we do for the Mother, what we have always done. Yet such sacrifices weaken the tribe. When several packs must die to bring down some Wyrm-spirit, the next spirit will face fewer defenders. Younger Brother accepted this, for he trusts only the way he knows — tear into a foe until it dies. But Older and Middle Brothers knew there had to be a better way. If humans attack a bear, many will fall to the animal's claws. But if the bear is trapped in a pit, it can hurt no one. And so it was that we set out to learn the secrets of trapping Banes.

"Uktena and Croatan searched for many turns of the seasons, asking questions of spirits, sometimes hiding in the tainted dens of Banes themselves to watch them. We continue to search, to this day. The Uktena brought back many

An Opposing View

Land-Rises-Up whispers:

Many of my brothers have bought into the Wyrmbringer's lie, that our people crossed a land bridge from their lands to these. We didn't cross no bridge. The Wolf-people of the Turtle Island didn't come from somewhere else. We've always been here. I will tell you the story that my Grandfather told me. In the ancient days, people lived on this land. But the Wyrm was there too, and it moved across land and sea and corrupted everything it touched. The Great Mother knew She needed warriors strong enough to fight the monsters before they covered up the world. So She sang a song of beauty and all the winds carried the song in all directions. And from the deserts and the forests and the plains and the swamps, seven wolves answered Her song and came to Her, and seven humans heard the song and followed it also. They all followed Her into a cave deep inside the sacred mountain at the center of the world.

And in the light of the sacred fire the people and the wolves danced to the rhythm of the sacred song. They joined together and their spirits mixed. Now Great Mother wished Her new wolf-people to go out into the world. But they did not wish to go, for the sacred fire was bright and the song was beautiful. So Great Mother asked Her sister to call to them. She did, and the wolf-people saw her silver light shining down into the cave, which drew them out into the world. But they were happy, because each one carried the song and the fire within them so they would never lose them. And they set out to fight the monsters as they were made to do, and Great Mother was pleased. That is my story.

things: songs of power and the secret names of great Banes, which gave us power over them. Many of these we shared with the Croatan, and together we lured the greatest evils to places where we could bind them. Some we sang to sleep; others we wrapped in cords of energy drawn from the very earth. And over each one we set guardians to stand vigil. So while the lesser evils were born and grew and in their turn were slain, the great evils stayed locked away, unable to harm anyone."

The Peoples

"Unlike what some Wendigo might say, humans reached these lands before us. We took as Kin those who suited our temperament, those who intrigued us. But we seldom lived among the nations we chose from; instead we were always apart from them, pursuing our own ways while keeping a distant eye on the comings and goings of the nations of Men. We taught our Kinfolk the ways of the Mother, to respect Her and Her creation. They in their turn became leaders and wise councilors among their own people. So it was that while we cherished our Kinfolk, we did not become overly attached to their lesser neighbors. Nations moved beyond the horizon, fought or joined each other, and sometimes died out. We had Kin in the territories of the other tribes, and they in ours, and we seldom fought over such things. This was the way of things, and apart from watching, teaching our Kin and stamping out evil wherever it took hold we had few dealings with People. I understand from some Wyrmcomers that other tribes meddled in the affairs of human nations from time to time. This, I think, is a mistake. Watching and striking when necessary is our role. We left kingmaking to our Kin.

"But keeping men in harmony with the Mother requires constant vigilance, and even in our strength the Wolf-People were never that numerous. Even in the heart of our homeland, darkness could creep in. For many, many seasons our Kinfolk guided the peoples in the desert canyons, living in harmony, in beauty with the earth. Seldom would we visit, for the people feared us as all do who aren't of our blood. But eventually our absences grew too long.

There were those who would not follow the path of beauty, but believed only in power. They made the people live in larger and larger towns, spreading their crops beyond their need so the people would grow and prosper. These wicked people turned the hearts of our Kinfolk, or killed them, and raided their neighbors constantly. And to become even more powerful, they turned to evil workers of magic. These witches killed with a look, and ate people as part of their rituals, to gain strength and set themselves apart from the harmony of the world. The leaders relied more and more on witches for knowledge of their enemies and the power to fight them. After a time, the witches were more powerful than the leaders, and often as not ate them to gain *their* strength."

He paused and shifted into a more comfortable position. But Erishka saw his eyes gleam under his dark brows, touching on each of the stone-still elders before settling a moment on her.

"Witches did great evil. People did their bidding out of fear, for those who tried to run or fight were cooked and eaten in their turn, or pinned to canyon walls to die in the sun and hang until the wind and sand had worn them away. Grandfather Serpent delighted in their evils and gave them still more power. The witches drew evil spirits to them to bring sickness and drought in order to punish resistance or to spread fear. But at last the Uktena returned to check on their Kin in the canyons, and found this atrocity. Many packs descended on the desert strongholds and slew the Banes and the witches. Then, under the guidance of our loyal Kinfolk, the people abandoned the cliff-cities for smaller villages in the south, and learned to live in harmony with the land again."

The Cult of the Enemy Heart

Thomas Snaps-the-Dark-Heart mutters from his dim corner:

Though our tribe was not there for the crafting of the Litany, we recognize the wisdom in each tenet. This includes the law against eating human flesh. Shamefully, not all have seen the rightness of this prohibition. In the long-ago days, our tribe searched for knowledge as they do now. One group discovered a rite that allowed the Uktena to draw strength and knowledge by eating an enemy's flesh. Those who practiced the cannibalistic ritual were known simply as Enemy-Heart-Eaters (though they consumed much more), and their primary targets were the witches who served Grandfather Serpent — how better to learn the plans and weaknesses of our greatest enemies? Sadly, the practice corrupted them.

Soon, their menu grew to include foes, allies, and even Kinfolk. Some Kin took up the bloody practice themselves, though they gained no benefits apart from the good will of the Heart-Eaters. Thoroughly corrupted, the Heart-Eaters used whole pueblos as bait to lure in powerful Banes, which were then bound into terrible fetishes. In time, other Wolf-People discovered the heinous acts, and several packs hunted down and destroyed every last Tainted Uktena. They hope.

"Though many of our Kinfolk suffered for the lapse, we learned from it. We learned the names of new evil spirits, and gained insights into the weaknesses and needs of human minds and hearts. We were stronger for it, and hunted the Wyrm with even more diligence.

"Here is a difference between Older Brother and his two siblings. We knew subtle evils continued to grow, even after we destroyed or bound them. Why should it not be so? Burned black by a wildfire, does not the forest grow green again in a following season?

"But our brother tribes believed otherwise. Of course, small Banes were often to be found if one looked hard enough, spreading illness or madness among the unwary. But they believed the great evils were bound forever as if evil

is finite and fixed. To them, all was a taintless paradise. We told the Children of Wendigo to watch for the evil, but they would not listen. They spent their strength against the bitter north winds and each other, and called us fools. Even when they fought the Wyrm's children, they blamed dark but untainted spirits. Little Brother closed his eyes and covered his ears, and would know nothing but what he believed.

"Turtle's followers likewise believed the lie, but unlike the Wendigo they could be shown the truth. Unfortunately, they did not react well to being proven wrong. Theirs was the fury of vengeance. For instance, among their Kinfolk was a prosperous nation in a fertile valley. They grew numerous and built high mounds and great cities. Yesterday as today, where many people gather, there you can find Grandfather Serpent. Yet Middle Brother would not see the corruption that grew in his own lands. In the end, it was our own tribe that saw the signs and showed them to the Croatan. In anger and humiliation they set to crushing the mound builders. The fallen ones were slain, by claw or by spirit-wrought misfortune. Yet the Croatan did not stop there — they harassed the nation and caused the crops to wither and the warriors to flee battle. The people fled or were captured by other nations or died of hunger. *Even their own Kinfolk felt their anger*. Many died, and the rest lost their lands and freedom to neighbor nations — nations who eventually were touched by Grandfather Serpent as well. We blamed ourselves for causing the destruction of so many for so little gain.

"Little Brother ignored us. Middle Brother overreacted. It should not surprise you, then, that Older Brother stopped speaking of Grandfather Serpent, and kept his own council as he fought the enemy in his own fashion. We sought out the evil in a place, tracking it to its source, and if we were in another's territory, we just did our work more quietly so as not to trouble our brothers with the truth.

"Eventually the other tribes noticed how we chose our words, or used misdirection, or simply said nothing at all. They started to distrust us, saying we gathered secrets like maize, yet shared nothing. And so we did. When all around us were things our brothers would not believe or must not learn, we learned to keep our secrets. We learned that lesson well."

In The Days of My Fathers

"These were in the days of our strength, the time the Wyrmbringers presumptuously call prehistory. They have no history of their own, so they must rely on turkey-scratchings to tell them their past. We do not need paper and ink to know things. We knew of *their* coming long before they did."

The Great Intrusion

"The Intruders, the Wyrmbringers, brought death to our Kinfolk and sickened the creatures, the air, the very land of Turtle Island. Perhaps our ancestors would have done things differently had they known. Perhaps not. Omens are too often understood only after the events take place. So it was with our foreknowledge of the Intruders."

Portents

"Many years before the Wyrmbringers washed over our lands, a few came to visit. Some came from across the eastern sea, some from the west. They never lasted long. They died of sickness or were killed or driven off. Sometimes, their Wolf-People protectors would come to aid their Kin. They say the Get of Fenris came after their treacherous Kin died. The land was the Wendigo's, but the delegation to meet the Intruders included a Croatan and an Uktena. They refused to listen to reason, demanding blood vengeance. But in their fury they were stupid, and between our strength and cunning, they were easily defeated and returned to their home." He paused and looked toward Three-Dart, who had shifted in his seat, and waited respectfully for a question.

"Where did you hear this story?" Three-Dart asked.

"From Smoke Rises, Three-Dart-rhya. And she heard it from... " He thought a moment, "Sharp-Tongue. Smoke-Rises gave me the right to tell the full story, which would take an hour in itself."

"I have heard of her. The name is true, for it always does." He nodded. "Very well, go on."

"Even after they left, our seers were troubled. The prophets saw strange visions, which, as is often the case, no one truly understood until it was too late. One such prophet, Snowy-Brush, saw a swarm of ants spreading from the shore, covering everything. They chewed away all the trees and grass and herbs, and built for themselves great hollow mounds like the termites in Africa do. And when they came to a rabbit, they swarmed it and bit it until it died. And the deer tried to run, but it wasn't fast enough. Every creature, from the grasshopper to the elk, and even the wolf, died and was chewed to nothing. But then a great black snake slithered into their midst, but no ants touched it. Instead, it fed on the ants, and grew bigger and fatter. The venom that dripped from its mouth blackened the earth. The great snake slithered into one of the mounds. Soon all was a desert and nothing moved but ants. So said Snowy-Brush, a legend of our people, from whose line Fought-in-the-Marsh-rhya descends." The gray wolf shook herself, her tail thumping the wooden floor once in acknowledgement of the compliment. Erishka thought, *What á suck-up*.

"This and many other visions came to us over the generations, but other than that our world went on as always. That would change."

Coming of the White Men

"A few scattered drops can herald the mightiest storms. So it was with the coming of the Intruders. They came in their ships and beheld our beautiful lands, lands that weren't protected by forts and walls and cannon as they were in Europe. So they stepped on our shores and claimed the ownership of all they could see. Sometimes, they traded with the villages they found. Often, they raided them for food, slaves or treasures. Their expeditions always lost many to illness or the hostility they fostered in the nations they met. Many times I have asked the elders why we did not drive them away.

Their answers were always different. We didn't notice, being busy with fighting evil spirits. We were few and always stayed near our sacred places. We left the nations to look after themselves, so long as no Wolf-People were among the Intruders. One elder told me that his ancestor asked the spirits what would happen with these explorers — would they keep landing on the coast and causing trouble? No, the spirit replied, soon they would die and no longer raid our shores. So the Spirit-Talker did nothing. And the spirit spoke true, for in time the explorers stopped raiding the shore, for after the plagues ran through the villages and the colonists came, the Intruders *owned* the shores, they were no longer ours. Sometimes the spirits don't tell the whole truth; that is why we must be clever and ask the right questions."

Warbringers

"The first of the Wolf People to follow their Kin to our shores were the Shadow Lords. That was unfortunate. If the Children of Gaia or even the Silent Striders had arrived first, I believe the meeting would not have had such tragic consequences.

"The Shadow Lords met with our tribe even as their Kin treated with Moctezuma. Their language was unknown, and even their Garou tongue was a little strange to us, being separated by thousands of years of speaking. We greeted them in the name of Uktena and the Great Mother. They guessed the latter was our name for Gaia, but they could not recognize our tribal totem. When we described Great Uktena I suppose it was all their leaders could do to keep the packs from attacking, for to them as to Younger Brother our totem sounded like the Wyrm incarnate. Still, we did not smell tainted.

"These Garou from the east were haughty, giving no gifts, sharing no smoke, only demanding that we report how we protected our people from the Wyrm. We were careful to reveal little to them until we understood them better, but our caution fuelled their mistrust. The ritual bloodletting the people practiced seemed to bother them greatly — these werewolves whose grandfathers spoke *for* the Impergium! We assured them that our packs were always watchful for Banes, and that they would find no more taint than we felt from the Spanish. Needless to say, there was much tension between our tribes.

"Then it all went wrong. One of their packs went snooping around the great pyramids. They discovered the great Bane that slumbered there. We have since learned that the Wyrmcomers never learned how to bind Banes this way, so they mistook the prison for a haven. In a fit of rage they slew the Bane Tender and attacked the Wyrmspawn. Rather than killing it, they woke it and were slain or driven away. The Bane touched both Aztec and Spaniard with bloodmadness. His own people stoned the Aztec king and there was a great slaughter on both sides.

"The surviving Shadow Lord packs accused us of being Wyrm filth and attacked us. We had no choice but to kill them all, for they had already done great evil to our land. Yet before they died, a messenger escaped into the spirit lands to bring word to their tribe of the great defeat. We were still dealing with the escaped Banes when many packs of Shadow Lords appeared out of the air and attacked. One of our Camazotz allies winged away in search of aid, but she died in a searing bolt of skyfire. We were forced from our caern in the crumbling Aztec Empire, driven into the jungles.

"Next, the slayers turned their attention to other peoples and other sacrificial cults, inadvertently freeing Banes that plague Mexico to this day. There they met the Balam and the Mokolé, and the Breeds immediately fell on each other. In their rage, the Jaguar People and the Lizard People lashed out at any Garou they found, including the Uktena. The Kinfolk of the Balam fell from sword and disease, and eventually they retreated to their Den-Realms. The Mokolé fell back to their wallows, killing any Wolf People who came near. But the Camazotz were not warriors. They could only run away, and they didn't even do that. They flew from ally to ally, reporting how the war progressed.

"Soon all were embattled, and none could aid the others. Day by day, the native warriors either disappeared or were slain, and there was nothing more for the Bat People to do. Some stories say they fell into despair, and simply waited or milled about. One by one, they died under the claws of the Wyrmcomers, even as packs spread northward in search of more Fera. They say the last Camazotz faced a pack of Shadow Lords in the penumbral shadow of his cave, the haunted look of failure in his eyes. When the klaive pierced him, he shrieked the most horrible cry, as if all his Breed were crying together, echoing all of Gaia's collective pain. Several of the Garou pack went mad; the murderer went deaf. But the cry echoed through the upper sky and all the worlds. It laid the Shadow Lords low, it is said, and for once they actually felt guilt for a wrong they had committed. From that day, the Lords took no part in the struggles between the Garou and the Fera of Turtle Island.

"There were other battles as well. Every time the European Garou met other changers, they assumed the worse. Perhaps they really believed Fera to be corrupt, but I suspect they believed the Changers would pay them back for the genocide the Garou committed in the War of Rage, and wanted to get in the first blow. Whatever the reason, when Fera were scented, European packs hunted them as hard as any Wyrmspawn. Some Fera managed to escape the worst of the persecution. The Nuwisha were clever enough to escape being caught, while the children of Grandmother Spider were adept at hiding in plain sight. But the Panther People suffered greatly whenever a pack brought them to bay. The loss of their Kin to Wyrmbringer persecution only hastened their decline. As for the Raven Folk, we weren't about to let them suffer the same fate as the Camazotz. As hard as it is to surprise a Corax, we made sure it was impossible. Of all the Fera-hunters, the Fianna were probably the worst, but for some reason they left the Corax alone — even those who hate Stag's tribe admit this. But they did their share of carnage, along with the Get of Fenris. I doubt any Intruder tribe is completely blameless, even the Children of Gaia. Someone in every tribe helped in the hunt, or at least did not hinder.

"Though we bear many grudges against each of the Wyrmcomer tribes, we reserve our bitterest hate for the Shadow Lords. They drew first blood against us, strengthening the Wyrm by their stupidity, and they drove to extinction a loyal Fera Breed so inoffensive not even a blind metis could claim Glory from the fight."

Tide-Borne looked up at the storyteller. His tone was soothing, yet Erishka heard the sterner edge of command beneath. "I understand the reasons for your anger, perhaps better than you do yourself. But while we may remember and not forgive, while we may distrust, we must not fall into the trap of hate. Hatred has taken Younger Brother, and he no longer seeks the path of wisdom, only of revenge. Besides," he added, glancing towards the glowering Three-Dart, "the Intruder's blood mingled with our own, eventually. For all that they weakened the nations and Gaia's cause, they also added their strength to our tribe." He accepted his charge's nod of acquiescence, and motioned for him to continue.

A Brother's Sacrifice

"The old grandfathers say that the death cry of the Bat-People echoed throughout the spirit world. Some say the extinction of a Changing Breed called one of the greatest of all evil spirits, and it came. If that is so, it did not come immediately, but then it had a long way to go. But come it did. It was called Eater-of-Souls, and it was part of the Wyrm itself.

"The Uktena first heard of its coming. It arrived with the speed of the wind and the roar of a tornado. The lucky spirits got out of its path, but the rest were consumed by the spiritual firestorm of its primal hunger. The spirits warned us that it meant to break through the borders of the spirit lands and enter our world, where it would devour all. We gathered in hurried councils, trying to determine where it would enter our world and what to do when it got here. We sent runners to the other tribes in warning and a call for aid, for we would need to unite as never before. But the Wendigo were scattered far and wide, and time was needed to gather them. Middle Brother did not answer our call.

"We do not know for sure what happened, for the spirits close enough to hear were destroyed. But some elders say the prophets of the Croatan learned where the Eater-of-Souls would appear: where the land met the eastern sea, the place the Wyrmbringers called North Carolina. Why there? No one knows. Some say there was no reason, it was simply a place. Others say it was drawn by the hunger of the starving Wyrmbringers who built their settlement there, or by a rite enacted by Black Spiral Dancers. Regardless, their greatest Spirit-Talkers devised a powerful rite, which would send the monster back where it came from. They knew that it would take the lives of a great many Wolf-People, and that even if they succeeded none would survive. The Croatan decided that the Children of Turtle would bear this burden alone, sparing their brother tribes so that Turtle Island might still have protectors.

"The Uktena messengers, and those of us who lived among the Croatan in those days, tried to change their

minds, to convince them to let the other tribes help them. But once Middle Brother had chosen a path, he could not be turned from it any more than a mountain can be moved by the strongest wind. They did honor us, however, by letting our people in their midst join the battle.

"In the spirit world we heard the sound like a distant thunderstorm, rushing and rumbling, and knew the monster had come. From caerns near and far, we called upon moon bridges to carry us to the lands of our brothers. But none came, for each of Middle Brother's caerns were closed to us. By the time our warriors reached the coastal battleground, it was over. All were gone —

Croatan, Uktena, Wendigo, Kinfolk and Wyrmbringers, body and spirit — and to this day no trace of the defenders has been seen in spirit homeland or as ancestor spirit.

"Bitterly we mourned Middle Brother's sacrifice. But now we had a new duty: to take up the burden the Croatan had laid down. We searched far and wide for the caerns of our brothers, reopening them where we could, concealing those we were too few to protect. Some we knew of, others we discovered. Likely some were never found. More importantly, we searched for the secret places where the great Banes were kept, to assume vigil over them. Most of these we found — *most.*

"Since then we have honored Middle Brother, and mourned him. He always dealt with us fairly, even when he did not choose to heed our counsel. Every year, in the depths of winter we sing a song of the Croatan to mark their sacrifice. Many septs sing to Turtle in the hopes that he will hear us and return.

"Middle Brother was also the bridge between us. Younger Brother and Older Brother listened to him more than they listened to each other. They drifted apart after that, each into his own concerns. Younger Brother blamed Older Brother for not saving Middle Brother (as younger brothers often do) and with no one to calm his anger, he let his Rage and hate burn stronger than the winter winds he favored. I think he secretly envied Middle Brother, too, and wished he could have died by his side. Older Brother understood his sibling's pain, for he blamed himself (as older brothers often will) as well — for not knowing where the evil would strike, and for not outthinking his brave-but-not-brilliant brother. And so he became lost in his search for secrets, for the knowledge he would need for future, as-yet-unimagined crises."

The Death of Many Peoples

"The Intruders were few at first, and though they had guns and armor and horses, we could have driven them from our shores as we did hundreds of years before. But they had a weapon more terrible and more effective than anything the Wyrmbringers could make with steel or wood or black powder — a weapon we could not fight. It was disease. Tuberculosis, cholera, measles, influenza, typhoid — all these and more were spread by the filthy, corrupted Wyrmbringers, but the worst of all was smallpox. It swept through villages time and again until there was no one left to contract it. Those it did not kill, it corrupted, disfiguring them inside and out. The peoples of this land had no reckoning of such plagues. When one fell ill, the family and the medicine men would hover near to provide support, and ended up infecting themselves.

"The great cities emptied and disappeared, leaving fallow fields and the occasional mound that a few years later the Intruders attributed to ancient civilizations. With the collapse of their societies, survivors escaped to smaller villages or reverted to their old hunter-gatherer lifestyle.

"The death began when the first Wyrmbringers set foot on our lands, but it did not end for hundreds of years. Most times the spreading of the contagion was accidental, although a Wendigo told me that once soldiers handed out smallpox-infected blanket to Indians, *intending* to cause sickness.

"Whole nations died out. All their cultures, their songs, their beliefs, their memories... all lost. Nations grew too weak to make war on the Intruders. In despair many lost their faith in the old ways and turned to the god of the Intruders. As the Intruders grew stronger, our Kin and their peoples grew weaker, dying in their lands, and later dying on the reservations.

"There's no way of knowing how many perished — even in the nations we favored we kept no count — but those who study such things say millions, maybe tens of millions, died from diseases brought by the Wyrmbringers. To those of our tribe who lived back then, the numbers were unimportant when their mates and children lay dying, their faces rotten with pox."

A Different View

Thirty-Scalps growls his own view:

I think the coming of the Europeans was *almost* a good thing. The people of our lands were growing too clever. They learned the secrets of growing corn rather than letting the Mother provide everything. They grew numerous and gathered into huge settlements. And certain men became powerful and were called chiefs and priests. They made up religions and made war on their neighbors for power instead of for food. The Wyrm loves such times, for it is easier to corrupt when there is great power to be had, and ten thousand men can do more harm than twenty alone.

So they built great mounds and pyramids for their leaders and their gods, and they spilled each other's blood in the names of lord and god, and the taint grew. And our ancestors could do little.

Then the invaders came and brought down the kings of the stone temples. Their diseases and their guns emptied the great cities and sent the survivors back to the small villages or the nomadic ways of the old days. Once this happened, we should have fallen on the invaders with all our might and killed them all so that they would forget the Pure Lands again. But we did not, and in the end the small numbers were our peoples' downfall.

Like Fire on the Plains

"They continued to come, these people from across the great water. A few here and there, not enough to be a threat. Some nations made them welcome while others fought them. But more and more came, and they built more forts and brought more weapons and their sicknesses. They traded with the Indians, and fought with them, but always they claimed more land. Soon the Intruders were a tide that couldn't be stemmed. And as their strength grew, so did their arrogance. They couldn't understand the Indian, so they tried to make him like themselves. If that didn't work, they made war — whatever it took to clear the land for more settlement."

Wars of Men, Wars of Wolves

"Wyrmbringers love to make war. The pure nations warred as well, but for the most part they had honest reasons, like defense and hunger. Because everyone was more or less the same, taking more than you needed in war would only tire you out, kill your warriors, so you couldn't defend against someone else. The Wyrmbringers usually wrap their true reasons in ideology, fighting and dying for false gods and virtues written on pieces of paper. They claim to make war on a people in order to help them, when really the Wyrmbringers just want to help themselves.

"The Europeans even fought each other, backing up claims for land they didn't live on anyway. The English and French both made allies among the Indian nations, goading them to fight rival Europeans and old enemies among the nations. Some nations rebelled against their white allies. Some remained neutral. These wars continued for nearly a hundred years. By that point, the English Intruders who had settled in the eastern end of Turtle Island began calling themselves Americans and made war on their people across the sea. Again, they drew in the nations, though this time more sided with the distant enemy than the one that cut down the forests and hunted Indians. But when the English gave up, they forgot about their old allies, who now felt the vengeance of the colonists. Fighting continued off and on, but in the end it was always the Indians who gave ground, either by musket or by treaty.

"Soon most of the east was under Intruder control, and they moved west. The Intruders once again fought among themselves, drawing their soldiers back east and giving the Indians more room. As there were very few Indians in the east anymore, the Intruders didn't bother trying to sway them to either side, though some Indians fought regardless — the Confederacy promised the return of lands to those who fought, but since they lost, the Indians who helped them were punished. When that war was decided, the Intruders turned their eyes westward once more, and the push began again. Iron rails and copper wires, the tools of Grandfather Spider, snaked across valley and plain. Grass was overturned and farmers planted crops in straight lines. Forests disappeared; game disappeared. Many millions of buffalo died for their hides, leaving to rot enough meat to feed the world. The Intruders were truly the servants of Weaver and Wyrm, for they knew nothing of harmony with the world or with other peoples. They spoke only lies and wanted only to change the world to their own design.

On Slavery

Eyes-of-Night, Uktena Half-Moon, teaches:

Owning other people wasn't invented by the Wyrmbringers. Fact is, the nations of the Pure Lands had slaves long before the Intruders came here. But the Intruders institutionalized slavery as was never seen before in these lands. From the beginning, the Spanish, Dutch, English, French, Portuguese — they all rounded up the locals to work for them. But the Indians weren't very cooperative; they revolted or escaped, and made themselves more trouble than they were worth. So the Wyrmbringers went to another source, Africa. To plantations in the West Indies and all along the Atlantic coast, slave ships carried my people in darkness and squalor, and more than a few died from sickness or fear before they ever set foot on land. Those that lived labored to grow rice, tobacco, sugar cane, cotton, or coffee — cash crops that needed many hands to grow and harvest. They toiled for their master's benefit, and were deemed only as useful as the work they could do. Near as I can figure it, my own blood kin were some of the last to come over before the trade was closed. Not even my spirit guides know just where in Africa they called home.

Lots of folks thought it was wrong to own other people, but money will always be a strong justification for evil. When up north they started making machines to do the work of hands, it got easier to look down upon slavery and slave owners. In the south, where all money was grown and not mined or built, you better believe they justified themselves and their heinous acts. Some slaves rose against their masters; they suffered for it. Some escaped, looking for refuge in the anti-slave movement in the north or, like my ancestor, hiding among the Seminole in Florida. But running was risky, and beatings were the least a runaway could expect if caught.

After the war and a couple of amendments, slavery was declared illegal. But that didn't make life for four million ex-slaves much easier. Being paid next to nothing is still getting paid, so even if you couldn't make a living, it technically wasn't slavery. Black folks, Mexicans, Indians, Chinese, they all got used by the Wyrmbringers. Though things ain't so bad as they were, they're still getting used. I'm not bitter. Okay, I guess I am. I want to know the land where my grandfathers lived, and the Wyrmbringers took that away from me. There's a small part of my heart that will always hold that theft against them. But I'm also part Pure Lander, and I have the lore of those ancestors to give me strength. I know who I am, and that is the most important thing of all.

"The Intruders tried everything they could to bring down our Indian Kin. They tried open warfare. They used treachery to capture and murder the leaders. The army disarmed villages then allowed settlers to murder them all. They took everything good to eat and poisoned what they could not take. They spent many lives and much gold to ensure there were no more Indians living free with only the Mother to provide for them. Many nations fought bravely, but in the end, all were penned up."

As the litany of wrongs done to the Indians continued, the elder called Sings-Back-the-Wind grew increasingly agitated. He seemed on the verge of interrupting when Cows-the-Gator switched his tack.

"But for all the Intruders did to the Indians and our human Kin, for the wolves they showed not even that much mercy. The Mother alone knows how many tens of thousands of wolves the Intruders killed. When the Indian wars were over, new settlers turned their attention to the wolf. They shot, they chased and trapped the animals with hatred going beyond even what they once felt for the Indian. Worst of all atrocities, though, was the poisoning of carcasses in the hopes of killing scavenging wolves. It worked, but it killed everything else that contacted it, from birds to dogs to children — anything that ate meat. Protecting our four-legged Kin became more difficult every year; we had to watch them closely so that they would not come too near the settlements, or eat carcasses without inspection. It was a difficult job, and it took valuable hunters from other tasks, but we have managed to keep them close to us, what few are left. Even now we must guard them, for while men still hunt them, others wish to study wolves. More than one caern has come close to discovery by curious scientists."

The Weaverbringers

Broken-Ice looks thoughtful:

The tribes of the Pure Lands have always called the newcomers Wyrmbringers, and that is true enough. But the Wyrm was always here, just waiting for the right moment to turn a heart or sicken a spirit. We were always watching for the Wyrm. But the Weaver was something else. It was never the threat to our lands that the Corrupter was. That changed with the invasions. Our Kin built and changed their world in small increments with stone and fire, but the Europeans hated to live in a place that didn't completely fit their idea of order. Forests where trees grew thick, natives who didn't kneel to the white god — these things the invaders hated. So they cleared lands, even pulling up tree roots. They made maps of the land, then drew lines on the maps, and built walls and roads where the lines ran. When rivers didn't go where they wished, they dug new rivers, straight as arrows.

Later, they cut down trees, shaped them and replanted them, and hung wires from them so they could talk to their people beyond the horizon. They built their iron roads, making bridges or blasting holes in mountains. The reshaping of the world continues to this day. The Wyrm could find no purchase without the Weaver to prepare for its coming. And this wouldn't have happened if the Europeans hadn't brought the Weaver across the sea.

The Kin Debate

"Now I will tell you about one of the great debates of our people. The tribe was in jeopardy. Many of our human Kinfolk were dead from warfare and disease. Most of our eastern four-legged Kin had been killed by the Wyrmbringers or taken as spoils by the Wyrmcomers. Our desperation grew, for the powers of Grandfather Serpent and the strength of the Wyrmcomers grew daily, while our own numbers dwindled.

"In the scrub and swamplands of Florida, bands of Creeks, Yuchis and Yamassees moved south and joined with the remnant bands that survived Spanish occupation. In time they were called Seminole, a corruption of the Spanish word for "wild" or "runaway." For among their number they harbored escaped slaves from the plantations to the north. The Uktena in these lands were intrigued, for some runaways recalled tales of their distant home, their legends, their charms and their encounters with the spirit world. A few of these we found possessed the keen insights and curious nature we prized in our own Kinfolk. A very few made a shocking revelation: in their veins ran the blood of other Changing Breeds, Fera unknown to the Uktena. The local Uktena listened to their stories, but more, they wished to take the newcomers as their own.

"Word of this traveled, and the scandal shook the Tribe. Many were outraged, but facing a lack of Kin, other septs also wished to open their Tribe to Kin from across the sea. Soon, a Great Council was held to discuss the question: should we include non-American Indians as Kinfolk? It seems straightforward now, but I'm hard-pressed to think of a more divisive issue in that time. The Floridian Uktena favored inclusion, while many of the western elders were opposed to mixing our blood. Others argued that between attrition by disease and the removals that were already happening in the north, there would be no natives left to mate with east of the Great River. Within septs and even packs there were divisions between what we today would call "traditionalists" and "progressives." The Council raged for weeks before it broke up and everyone went back to their own lands.

"After thinking about it over the winter the Uktena gathered again. More now thought as the progressives, but many were still against the idea. Two of the most influential Uktena at the council were a Gibbous-Moon traditionalist called Yellow Fur, and a Half-Moon progressive named Spearcatcher. Knowing Yellow Fur's rousing words were keeping his camp together, Spearcatcher challenged Yellow Fur. Yellow Fur did not wish to fight at first, so he demanded that Great Uktena should send them a sign. They built a sacred fire, and followed its smoke into the spirit world, and watched to see which way the smoke would go. But then they argued about the significance of the direction, because the seers read different meanings in way the smoke traveled, so that nothing could be decided.

"In frustration, Yellow Fur cried out for combat, and soon the two were circling each other. The Songkeeper had seen more battles than the Half-Moon, but his Rage burned hotter. Spearcatcher made no telling blows, but danced just beyond Yellow Fur's claws while taunting his opponent. Finally, the four-legs fell into fury and leaped upon Spearcatcher, rending him almost to death. But for frenzying he had lost the challenge, and was cast from the debate.

"Without the good words of Yellow Fur, the traditionalists lost ground. They settled for a compromise. We would not accept as Kin the Europeans who killed our people with gun and cross and sickness. But we would share the strength of our blood with those whose life and lands the Wyrmbringers also savaged. At the time, this was primarily the people brought in chains from across the sea, the Africans.

"Younger Brother did not care for this at all. The Wendigo said that cleaving to the outsiders was one more step towards our subjugation by the Wyrm. Our decision created a rift between the people of the Pure Lands that has not fully healed, even to this day. But for all their bitterness, and that of some like-minded Uktena, it was the right choice. Once we started looking, it was easy to find suitable Kin. Many of the runaway slaves we took in had strong, resourceful minds. A few remembered their own tribal lore and we listened eagerly. We learned there were still Changers in Africa as well. In time, though, Uktena's children mingled with Maori and Polynesian and Montagnard. We have even taken Kin hailing from the deserts of the Middle East and the steppes where our first ancestors roamed. Through them we found new strength, new secrets, new ways of seeing the spirits. But I will speak of that another time. For the greatest part of our history is and will always be found on Turtle Island."

The Removals

"The Intruders didn't like to see any Indian. They wanted our Kin out of sight, over the next ridge, across the next river. Then they would be satisfied until more Wyrmcomers came and wanted new land. I suppose killing every last one of the native peoples would have been too difficult or too distasteful to them, so instead they signed treaties with members of the tribes and "bought" the land. Our people did not truly understand how one could buy land. The Intruders did not understand how a nation could claim territory without individual ownership. The Intruders made a series of "final" treaties, which they broke as soon as enough new Intruders arrived. Often the treaties were made in threat, sometimes by bribing individuals who didn't truly speak for their nation. But once signed, the Europeans enforced them until *they* were ready to break them. Eventually, the greedy Intruders decided that the best thing to do would be to move all the Indians westward.

"The Five Civilized Tribes—Seminole, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and especially the Cherokee — had made efforts to integrate their tribal ways with those of the Intruders, farming plantations, educating themselves and even (in the case of the Cherokee) creating an alphabet for their newspapers and legal documents. But though the Intruders claimed to want to "civilize" the natives, they really just wanted them

gone and the land cleared for white settlement, timbering, and mining. So by force or by cunning the lands were taken, one by one. The Cherokee used the Intruder's laws against them, but though the high court declared in their favor, we know paper means nothing against the sword.

The Seminole defended themselves the only way that mattered to the Intruders — by spilling the blood of those who would remove them from their lands. In the end, the nations were driven from their ancestral homes and forced to march to the grasslands of the west. Many died from malnutrition, exposure and disease. Their bodies lay in unmarked graves beside the road — when they were allowed burial at all. More died at their new "home". The rest were forced more and more to rely on the government for rotten meat where once they provided for themselves.

"Some few of our close Kin we hid near our caerns until the danger was past. Some Uktena followed their Kin westward, still protecting them, though they were yet in the territory our tribe claimed. Eventually, the Intruders demanded part of this already cramped space. They carved up the reservations, giving each Indian a small part, which he could then sell. Many did, still not understanding how one could own land and bar others from so much as walking on it.

"In time, most tribes were corralled on reservations. Some, like the Navajo, were lucky enough to have their homeland called a reservation, but many others were forced from the land where their ancestors dwelt, where their strength lay. And even reservation land was only inviolate if the Intruders had no other use for it."

Tale of the Wyrmcomers

"The many tribes of Wyrmcomers streamed in to find land to take. Many said they were coming to defend Turtle Island from Grandfather Serpent, but they could not protect their *own* land from him! No, they were hungry for new territory, less crowded, less tainted. We were in the way. We had our own ways and customs created over thousands of years, and they had theirs. When they came they expected us to follow *their* ways! Others called us weak and demanded we give up our caerns to the stronger tribes! I will grant, as many will not, that many of the foreign Wolf-People added their numbers to our defenders when we would let them, rather than claim our holy places outright. Often, though, we refused, and they grew angry and demanded the caerns. In truth, we weren't as strong as we once were. We were spread too thin, keeping alive our old caerns as well as those we inherited from Middle Brother. It had been enough, until the invaders brought more evil to our shores.

"Holding on to what was ours grew harder year by year. Our Kin were killed in warfare or by disease, and fighting the growing number of mockeries and evil spirits took its toll. We had no choice but to share caerns, though too often sharing wasn't what the Wyrmcomers had in mind. Other caerns we sealed and hid, frustrating the Intruder Garou. But the greatest reason we fought our own kind to keep the caerns was the great Banes that slumbered in the ground. We were sure no

Closed Frontier, Fallen Spirit

Calls-the-Spirit-Back speaks:

We have always tried to teach our Kin how to live in harmony with the Mother. Sometimes, when a Kinfolk's spirit burns bright as flame, we tell them more so that he can become a prophet for his people. One such man was Tavibo of the Numu, or Northern Paiute. He could cure the illnesses the Intruders loosed upon the peoples, and spirits showed him visions. He found one of our sacred places and asked our Spirit Talkers to explain a vision he had, a vision of war beyond all reckoning, and the desecration of the Mother. The Crescent Moons all agreed that it was a vision of the Apocalypse. What was interesting was that Tavibo saw that after the destruction came a renewed world, where land was lush and game was plentiful. The Uktena taught him a dancing rite to bring to his people. Tavibo soon joined with another holy man, Wodziwob, who gained a following among many surrounding tribes. His teachings founded what the Europeans called the Ghost Dance, because after the destruction of all things all the people would come back from the dead. Eventually, the followers grew restless. When the promised apocalypse did not come, they left him.

Tavibo's son, Wovoka, who also had a burning spirit, listened to his father's teachings. When the moon ate the sun, he too had a vision. He said the Great Spirit told him to tell all the peoples to lay down their weapons and live in peace with each other and with the Intruders. They should also forsake the white's evil habits — lying, drinking — then they would rejoin their loved ones in a place where death could not follow. Wovoka did as the vision told him, and soon people came from 30 nations to learn about this new Ghost Dance. Some among the Uktena and even the Wendigo came to hear what he had to say. Unfortunately, the stories the people brought back to their nations were often different from what the prophet himself spoke. They said that Wovoka would drive away the Intruders and bring back the buffalo. They told of the destruction and rebirth of the world where all the dead would live again and the whites would no longer trouble the pure lands. These stories were especially popular among the Wendigo, who fell over one another trying to find the spirits who gave such foresight.

But whatever the truth of the visions, the Intruder feared they meant renewed uprisings. So they brutally suppressed the dances, the prayers, or any sign of the Dance. But even the Massacre at Wounded Knee could not stop the belief entirely, though many lost heart. Wovoka continued quietly speaking to believers until his death, but the Ghost Dance Movement did not rise again. The fighting spirit of the peoples was leashed, and most lost hope. The buffalo were gone, the medicine was gone, and lines drawn on a map caged all the nations. The government declared there was no more frontier, for there was no place the Intruders did not live. The Indian Wars had ended in defeat.

Wyrmcomer would know the rituals to keep the evil bound, and most wouldn't care — like Younger Brother, they believed Banes were to be destroyed, not bound.

"But with Intruder encroachment, evil spirits and aggressive werewolves challenging us at every turn, we still had another threat to face, an old threat the Wyrmcomers brought. Called the Black Spiral Dancers, they are a tribe of Wolf-People who have utterly forsaken the Mother. Once they were a fierce tribe who decided to take the fight to Grandfather Serpent's very den. They sacrificed themselves for glory's sake, not for honor as did Middle Brother. I believe the Black Spiral Dancers are what the Wendigo might have become if asked to make such a sacrifice," he mused.

Breath hissed through clenched teeth, and hackles rose. Tide-Borne raised his hand to silence the listeners. "You would be well advised not to say such things outside this hall," he rumbled. "And it may not have been so wise to say it even here. I understand what you are trying to say, but you are young and you've never even seen a Black Spiral. I have spoken with a few at length."

The elder paused a moment to let that sink in. "Our northern brothers are driven by the fires of Rage, and their hatred for those who responsible for all their losses may well undo them. But there is honor aplenty within Younger Brother, more than in many Wyrmcomer tribes. There was too much bloodlust and dark longing in the tribe that fell, becoming the Spirals, and little of what we would call honor." Seeing all were suitably mollified, and that the speaker was equally chastened, Tide-Borne nodded for him to proceed.

"The Black Spirals are vicious and perverse, but they are also cunning. A few actually treated with members of our tribe early on. They sympathized with our losses and offered their support against the tribes which wanted to take our land." Cows-the-Gator shook his head. "Naturally, we saw through them at once. They can't hide the smell of Grandfather Serpent's bile running through their veins, no matter how pretty the face they show us. Nevertheless, some played along to find out more about what they believed, what they could do and what they wanted. We spoke little about even less, and listened much. Never, ever would we let the Wyrmspawn near our caerns.

We destroyed the Wyrmridden fools in due time, but now we knew more about the Wyrm's chosen than those who had fought them for over a thousand years! Of course, whenever we told any of what we knew to the others (almost always out of necessity for the situation, but sometimes in exchanges of information), their suspicion of us deepened. Not that we trusted them. Even if we overlooked the fact that the Wyrmcomers had tried to take our caerns, we couldn't overlook that they needed only the slimmest of reasons to justify trying again."

The Storm Eater

"Still, we lost ground, just as all the Mother's warriors still do. But the other tribes soon learned why we can't be thrown aside so lightly. As they had when the Aztecs fell, the Wyrmcomers awoke sleeping Banes with their stumbling around. Sometimes, they did destroy the monsters, but at the cost of several packs. If they were lucky, an Uktena who knew the proper ritual could be found to sing the evil to sleep or wrap it tightly in a cocoon of power. More often, the beast escaped into the Umbra, and we would eventually have to hunt it down ourselves. The other tribes actually blamed us for leaving these "traps" for them to find! It is a hard thing to be vilified by those whom you protect, and protect those who seek to harm you! We expect such treatment from Younger Brother, for it is the way of brothers. Now it seems we are Older Brother for all the Garou.

"But as I was saying, the great Banes would stir now and again, awakened by activities on the surface or the neglect of their bonds. One in particular — I would not say its name even if I knew it — became more than what it was. Its Tenders dead and forgotten, the caerns powering its wards defiled or abandoned, this great Bane awakened when a railroad was laid directly above its resting place. One day, it rose up — and ran into a powerful spirit of Grandfather Spider. The two spirits commenced fighting, each trying to destroy the other. Instead of destruction, they merged in a terrible joining. The drive for perfect order acquired a hunger; the urge to corrupt gained focus. And this abomination earned a name, Storm Eater, and it took a new purpose: to consume the energies of Grandfather Smoke. Some think it was trying to achieve the unity lost so long ago, others said it hated what it could not have. It raged through the spirit world, devouring everything touched by the Wyld. With each Wildling consumed, it grew more powerful, and as it roared through the spirit world it shed strange mixtures of Bane and Weaver spirit, some of which possessed anyone unfortunate enough to be nearby.

"It took a great deal of effort to find a rite of binding for what the Bane had become. But it took even more effort to get the Pure Ones and the Wyrmcomers to trust each other enough to work together. If it was hard for us, it was nearly impossible for Younger Brother. Our greatest hero of that time, a Songkeeper called Silent-Storm, reminded the Wendigo council of Middle Brother's honorable sacrifice; surely, the Croatan would not shirk their duties because of mistrust? He spoke with conviction and passion and knew how to melt their frozen hearts. In the end one of their own heroes stepped up to take his place at the rite, while a fine pack of Wendigo died to draw the Storm Eater to the site where it was bound. And Silent-Storm and the other twelve heroes died to bind the beast again.

"But we must remember that this Weaver-Bane was only one of many Banes that are imprisoned. We cannot forget the many Uktena who have died before and since to bring down the great evils, and all those whose vigilance keeps us safe. The other tribes may distrust us, may slander us, but it is because they don't know — and should never know — what horrors we keep locked away."

Beyond our Shores

"As I said, once we began taking Kinfolk born beyond our shores, we heard their tales of distant homelands. So we began visiting these lands to learn more. In some, we were welcomed, but in most we were not, for the Wyrmcomers that came before us left the local Changers with a poor impression of Wolf-People. The Cat-People of Africa, the strange folk of the Far East, all were distrustful and proud. But even when they meant to tell us nothing, we could learn much. We also found Kinfolk in these places — just a few here and there — but they taught us much of their own cultures.

For example, we learned that the Ainu, the dwindling natives of northern Japan, revered the bear as a teacher, provider and intermediary to the spirit world. Looking deeper into distorted legends and rituals held in the fading memories of the elders, we gained insights into the ways of the long-extinct band of Bear-People that guided the ancestors of the Ainu in prehistoric times. We discovered people in the highlands of Southeast Asia who felt the touch of their ancestor's spirits more surely than most, and those who saw the spirit world most clearly shared their ways, and their blood, with us. These and others we met, and they give us their own strength in the war we fight against Grandfather Serpent."

Death of the Dreamers

"Word reached us, some time before the time of the Wyrmbringer's War Between the States, that a new tribe had been discovered by Wyrmcomers following their Kin to uncharted parts of the world. The first report was actually relayed by an Uktena who overheard a Silver Fang complaining that their plans for a new protectorate was blocked by an unknown native tribe. A Great Council was held to decide what should be done, and a pack was formed to meet this tribe that caused the Wyrmcomers such trouble. Unknown to them, a Theurge called Sings-With-The-Moon was already on his way from the moment he heard of the Bunyip; he couldn't wait to learn who they were.

"What he found were Garou, as the Wyrmcomers call us all, but nothing like Sings had ever seen. For one thing, their four-foot Kin were not wolves at all, but strange striped beasts that carried their young in pouches! Their dances, their dealings with spirits, their traditions, were just similar enough to be recognizable to the Uktena. The land they still held against the invaders was as pure as our own land had once been — maybe more so. And what fired Sings' mind most of all was their totem: a giant water snake called the Rainbow Serpent. Could this be an aspect of Great Uktena? Could this alien tribe be lost brothers to the Pure Ones?

You can imagine Sings-With-The-Moon's excitement and driving curiosity. He treated the strange tribe members with respect, and although their customs were different they recognized that this Garou was different from the Europeans. Still, they probably saw the thousand questions that burned behind his eyes, his greed for knowledge. While they treated him politely, they did not reveal their secrets, holding him gently at arms' length.

"When the Wyrmbringers sniffed around their sacred spots, the Bunyip sent them away with strange but short-

lived madness, but when Sings did so he was simply asked to leave. The Bunyip remained polite but aloof when more of our tribe arrived, as well. It is a pity, for united we might have made a difference in the War of Tears.

"It seemed most of the Wyrmbringer tribes had some grievance against the Bunyip. The Silver Fangs wanted to be acknowledged as rulers, no matter how worthless the land was to them. They couldn't do this with a hostile tribe holding the territory. The Red Talons wanted territory, too, but they were frustrated beyond howling that the native Kinfolk weren't true wolves. The Fianna, as usual, were easily insulted and greedy for caerns. Even the Black Furies held grudges, and a few Shadow Lords had forgotten their shame and sided with the other Wyrmcomers.

"It is easy to believe the worst in someone you don't trust, cub. And with a little help from the Black Spiral Dancers, the Europeans saw the Bunyip as soldiers of Grandfather Serpent, and made war against them. The War of Tears lasted a year; a whole year with packs battling the tribe, killing them to the last. There was nothing we could do, for though we were not their hunters, still we were outsiders. The tribe died beneath claw and klaive, and the Great Mother wept while the Black Spirals howled in joy even as they built their hives in the new land.

"We did as we had when Middle Brother died; we took our place at the empty caerns. But it was different, for the native spirits showed us only anger. It took many, many years to gain the trust of even a few. Now we have taken the native peoples of Australia as Kinfolk, and we have added their knowledge to our own.

"But make no mistake. Australia is cursed for our kind. The ghosts of the lost tribe still haunt the spirit world, the native spirits refuse to share their Gifts, and the land itself has not forgotten the slaughter of its defenders. It is a land of pain for us."

Our Days Grow Short

"The last century has seen despair and hope, but always we have been active. The rest of the world fought great wars in which our Kin were more involved than we. However, even in Europe we had tasks. For instance, the Nazis were searching for ancient books and objects of occult power, grasping for any edge they could find. We likewise searched. When we found something of genuine power, we would sometimes fashion a replica for them to find. Granted, we sometimes needed the support of the European tribes, but it was only right considering it was *their* pelts we were trying to save.

"Take our Indian Kinfolk. For over a century, they've been penned or spread out among the cities of the Intruders, away from the land where their blood lived. Their old ways, their culture and languages were forgotten as the Intruders tried to "assimilate" the Indian. Yet now a strange thing has happened. Pride has begun to return both the Indian's dignity and the Intruders' respect for the people they tried to destroy. White folks proudly claim native blood in their veins, blood their great-great-grandfathers spilled. Indian art and music, legends and worldview attract increasing numbers of Intruders. Just as importantly, more Indians are rediscovering the wisdom of the old ways, of harmony with the earth. Many lost Kinfolk have been found in this way. And while our wolf Kin are still scarce, they are very slowly increasing. Though in many places they are still shot on sight, they are freer to run than they once were. We must still watch them closely, for the thinning of our wolf blood upsets the balance within us."

"That sounds easy enough," said Three-Dart wryly. "To think we were worried about our extinction two hundred years ago."

Cows-the-Gator took the hint. "Past struggles seem easier to those who did not live in those times, Three-Dart-rhya. But our Kin did suffer and fight to better their lot. They fought, sometimes with weapons, more often with words. The Intruders did their best to take away the culture of the First Peoples. Likewise with our adopted Kin. The descendants of slaves, who long ago lost all ties to their ancestral cultures, had no voice and no power in the Wyrmbringers' world. Likewise, the prospects of more recent immigrants have ever been uncertain; from the south and from the east the laws and the Intruders turn against them at the least provocation. For many it took decades of struggle to be recognized, and the struggle continues. Some among the Wyrmbringers fought, and fight, for the people of our Kin. We recognize the justice of it, but we also are wary of the open hand of the outsider, for we know that good acts are not always backed by good intentions.

"Long ago, we watched over our Kin at a distance. Now, we don't have that luxury. With humans everywhere, with the Spider and the Serpent so close, we need our Kin at our sides — and they need us more than ever, for our enemies are numerous and hunt those of our blood. Where before we cared little for human conflicts, now we aid our allies as best we can. We guard the marchers, feed information to the activists, protect the leaders among them. Sometimes it is enough."

"I say there is hope. There will always be hope, so long as one of us draws breath. But the Mother is threatened more than ever in our land. The cities spread like cancer, reaching out for each other. The air is fouled, as is the water. The Intruders no longer hear the earth breathe, no longer feel the soil beneath their feet, no longer see the rhythm of life in harmony. It sickens their souls as the chemicals they consume sicken their bodies. Our brave warriors have more enemies than ever and many of those enemies can't be hurt by claw or arrow. Those who fight for the Mother bicker amongst themselves while She cries in pain. But we hear Her cries better than anyone else. Only we listen to Her. Death approaches, but the People of Uktena do not flinch. Here we are resolved to defend the Mother, whether alone as did Middle Brother, or with all the Garou at our side. Either way, we shall protect Her, with courage in our hearts, skill in our hands, and wisdom in our minds. This is our legacy. This is our destiny. That is my story."

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The Kinfolk Crossroad

Nose-to-the-Wind, Uktena No-Moon, ponders:

It's a dilemma, isn't it? I mean, we want our Kinfolk to have the best, right? Happy, prosperous, connected — the American Dream. How do they get there? By buying into the system, the system that oppressed their ancestors, the system that stripped them of their culture in the first place. The Indians who were whipped if they spoke their native language, the Africans who were half a world from the birthplace of their forebears, the Aztecs who learned their rosaries at the point of a sword... all lost much or all of their cultures. Those we counted as Kinfolk managed to retain their people's lore, or at least fragments of it, even if it was hidden under a veneer of their conqueror's civilization.

These days it's hip to be an American Indian, and a voodoo practitioner has a cool mystique, but they're still on the margin of mainstream society. You won't find hogans in the suburbs, and practicing ritual blood sacrifice will get the police, ASPCA and probably some fundamentalists on your case. When exposed to pop music and console games, kids will find the old stories as irrelevant as the elders who tell them. The middle-class lifestyle beckons the nations away from the life of balance in Gaia. By accepting the lure of material wealth and comfort, they join the mainstream culture that bleeds the Mother dry and fouls the earth. And in the process, they forget the wisdom unique to the old nations, knowledge that can only thrive in deserts or forests beyond the Weaver's reach — the lore that drew the Uktena's interest in the first place. The system tried to assimilate them by force, and now our Kin want to finish the job. So what do we do? Encourage our Kinfolk to join the First World and *hope* they can vote green, recycle, run environmental action websites — and believe in their grandmother's wisdom? Or do we keep them close to the earth, on a harder edge of survival, living as their fathers taught them and hoping Civilization doesn't trample them?

Do we have a choice anymore?

The hearing finished, Cows-the-Gator, Erishka and Jolon were sent from the hut. The latter two huddled close to the fire in hopes of discouraging the cloud of mosquitoes that hovered all around. Cows had too much nervous energy to remain still — or to stay quiet.

"Tide-Borne said if I passed the challenge he'd let me go with him to the next Great Council," he said to the two with pride. The measured speaking voice had fallen away, replaced by the everyday sounds that were more familiar to the Half-Moon's ears. "I'll hear the arguments, all that the septs are doing and talking about. I won't have to wait for word to come back to the sept." He looked down almost pityingly at Erishka. His empathy lasted only a glance, and he was once again caught up in expectation. "And there's so much going on right now. Like finding out if there really is a perfect metis, and what it would mean for us."

"You mean a metis with no deformities? How can that be?" asked Erishka.

"*That's* what they're talking about. Also, what is the Wyrm's Eye? Yeah, the red star that shines in the Umbra now. The Uktena have sent packs into the Aetherial Realm to find out what it is, and all the gray-furred elders are wracking their brains for any old prophesy that refers to the star." At this, he paused and glanced towards the hut. Cows picked up the last unburned log, crouched between the other two and lay the wood on the fire. Remaining where he was, he spoke low into Erishka's ear. "This is between us. You owe me a secret, got it?" The girl nodded, and he continued. "After the last Great Council, I overheard Tide-Borne and the other elders talking. Seems there were some Bane Tenders there. You know how they get everybody's attention just by showing up. Well, they said that since the Red Star showed up, they've all felt the Great Banes stirring, and they've been working harder to keep the bindings from slipping.

The thing is, you still have all those Banes under the caerns the Wyrmcomers stole. We can't very well walk up to those septs and say, 'Hi, thought you should know, but there's an unkillable Bane under your caern and he's waking up.'" He grinned smugly at Erishka's expression. "That's right. Hell's gonna break loose soon. So this next meeting, they're talking about establishing some ties with the other septs, trying to get our folks where they can sniff around the lost caerns. Maybe we can teach them to trust us real quick, 'cause I guaran-damn-tee you every one of those septs will bite the dust if they don't let us help. And if they all go, we're screwed." He rose and resumed his pacing, one eye on the hut. "That'll give you something to chew on. But don't tell anyone," he added nervously.

Erishka's Notebook

"Don't tell anybody," he said. Like who? It's obvious he didn't want the Kinfolk to hear, and I suppose I understand that. I guess he'd get in trouble if he told that one. Unless he's pulling my leg. Do these guys do that? He seemed pretty serious. And pretty full of himself, especially since the elders made him a Fostern. If it's true, we do have some secrets, big secrets. And maybe its time we found somebody who needs to hear them.

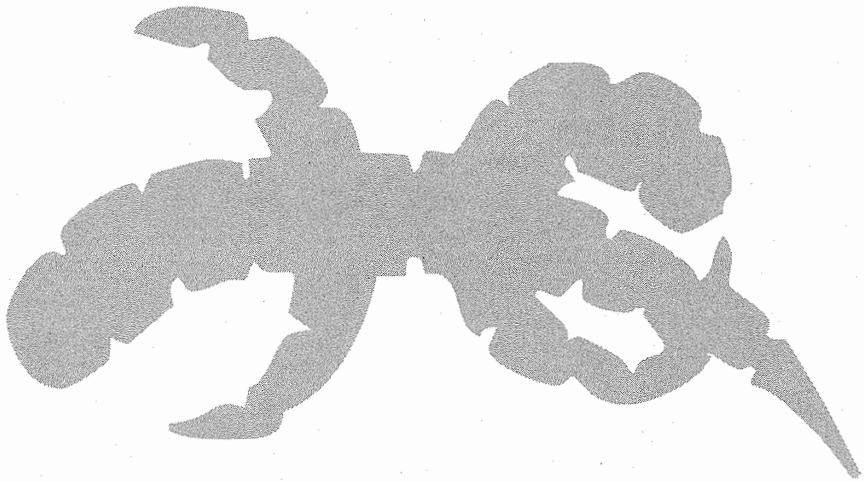
Timeline

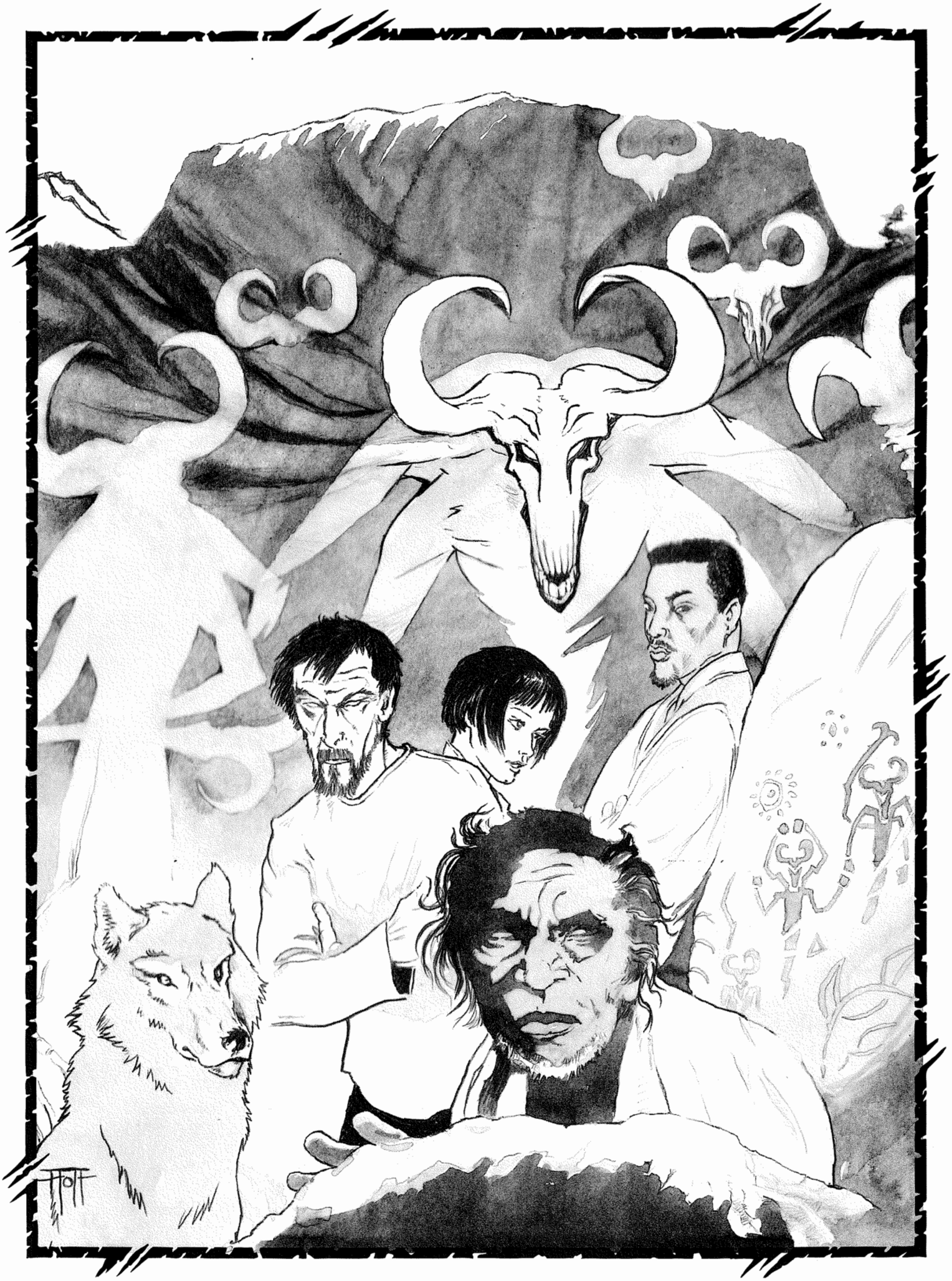
Below are just a few selected dates that are relevant to Uktena history. For more detail, dig through the sources listed at the end of Chapter Three.

c 40,000 — 10,500 BCE	Hunter-gatherer peoples cross from Asia into North America. *The Three Brothers cross over at the latter part of this range.*
c. 1500 BCE	Dog domesticated in North America.
c. 300 BCE — 200 AD	Adena mound-building culture in Ohio Valley. *Culture collapses when Croatan attack Wyrm-Tainted and non-Tainted alike.*
c. 100 BCE — 1300 AD	Hisatsinom (Anasazi) culture in Southeast.
c. 300-900	Mesoamerica's classic period.
c. 500	Bow largely replaces atlatl in North America.
c. 700-1550	Mississippian (temple mound building) culture.
c. 1000-1015	Vikings visit and later establish settlements in North America.
c. 1300	*Enemy Heart Eaters are brought down by fellow Uktena.*
1492	Christopher Columbus lands in San Salvador. Thinking he is in India, he calls the natives Indians. On a subsequent voyage two years later, he captures 500 Indians to be slaves in Spain.
1497	The Cabots of England explore northern Atlantic coast, kidnap Indians.
1512	Colony of New Spain founded; landowners given the right to enslave local Indians.
1513	Vasco Balboa crosses Central America. Ponce de León in Florida (dies from wounds in 1521).
1519-21	Spanish conquest of Mesoamerica. Hernán Cortés conquers Aztecs. *Shadow Lords meet with, then attack local Uktena.*
1521	*Shadow Lords slay the last Camazotz, whose cry echoes throughout the Umbra.*
1534	French explorer Jacques Cartier explores along St. Lawrence River. Fur trade begins.
1539-43	Hernando de Soto claims Florida, expedition explores up to Mississippi River. He dies in 1541.
1540-42	Francisco de Coronado explores the Southwest. Horses introduced to North America.
1578-79	Francis Drake explores California coast.
1584-87	Sir Walter Raleigh organizes an expedition and two colonizing voyages to the Outer Banks.
1589	*The Croatan sacrifice themselves to drive the Eater-of-Souls into the outer darkness.*
C 1600	Sheep introduced to North America by Spanish.
1619	First shipload of African slaves arrives in British colony of Virginia.
1621	First formal treaty between Indians and Europeans. Pilgrims celebrate first Thanksgiving.
1626	A band of the Lenni Lenape sells Manhattan Island (which is held by a different band) to the Dutch for 60 guilders worth of goods.
1641	The "Body of Liberties" for the colony of Massachusetts recognizes and regulates the practice of keeping Indians as slaves.
1659	First documented use of horses by Indians (a Navajo raid).
1689-1763	A series of four wars between France and England and their respective Indian allies.
1755	British offer 40 pounds for the scalps of enemy Indians.
1776	Declaration of Independence cites the use of Indian allies against the colonies as the last in a long list of indictments against King George III.
1808	Congress bans the importation of slaves.
1809-11	Shawnee Chief Tecumseh attempts to unite tribes east of the Mississippi against the United States. Tecumseh later dies aiding British in 1813.
1809-21	Sequoyah invents Tsalagi alphabet to match the Cherokee language.
1819	*Great Council opens Kinship to non-Europeans.*

1824	Bureau of Indian Affairs created.
1830-39	Indian Removal Act passed; Five Civilized Tribes relocated west of the Mississippi.
1830's	*Storm Eater released.*
1840s	*First Uktena arrive in Australia.*
1850s	Chinese immigrants begin arriving in California. More than 5,000 Hawai'ians died from smallpox. *First packs arrive and establish a sept in Hawai'i.*
1862	Federal Indian policy reclassifies Indian nations as "wards of the government."
1863	The Emancipation Proclamation declares the freedom of all slaves in the rebelling states, but not those in the slaveholding states, which remained loyal to the Union.
1864	More than 300 Indians killed in Colorado's Sand Creek Massacre.
1865	13th Amendment to the Constitution frees all slaves in the United States (some four million), but did little to change conditions for minorities in the United States. Pro-immigrant politicians begin to replace earlier anti-immigrant policies.
1869	First transcontinental railroad.
1871	Wholesale slaughter of buffalo by Intruders commences; southern herd all but gone by
1880.	Western Indians forbidden to leave reservations without permission.
1877-86	Apache resistance under Victorio and later Geronimo.
1880's	"Friends of the Indians" groups encourage bringing native peoples into mainstream American life.
1887	Dawes Act divides Indian land into private tracts, with "surplus" land sold.
1889	Oklahoma land rush. A solar eclipse on January 1 inspires the Paiute prophet Wovoka to found the second Ghost Dance Movement.
1890	*Thirteen legendary werewolves, one from each of the tribes present in North America, sacrifice themselves in a mighty rite to bind the Storm-Eater.* The government suppresses the Ghost Dance. More than 150 Indians are killed in the Wounded Knee Massacre. The Indian Wars are over. Federal Census Bureau declares the frontier closed.
c. 1910	Lowest Indian Population in the United States (< 250,000).
1909	President Roosevelt transfers 2.5 million acres of reservation land to national forests.
1914-18	World War I. Many Indians enlist. Choctaw use native language as code.
1918	Native American Church incorporated.
1920s	Suspicion of foreigners during WWI leads to a series of laws limiting immigration.
1930s	*War of Tears results in the annihilation of the Bunyip.* The Great Depression results in few immigrants to the United States, and hundreds of thousands of recent immigrants return (willingly or forcibly) to their native lands.
c. 1935-40	Navajo alphabet invented.
1939-45	World War II. Tens of thousands of Indians enlist. Several tribes use native language as a code.
1960s	Social unrest marks the decade with protests, riots, and racially-motivated murders.
1964	The strongest Civil Rights Act in U.S. history is passed.
1965	New immigration laws no longer favor Western European immigration, resulting in a surge in Asian immigration (particularly of refugees).
1968	American Indian Civil Rights Act. American Indian Movement founded.
1981	U.S. government begins a series of cutbacks resulting in nearly 40 percent loss of funds for Indian social programs.
1990	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act requires federally funded museums and federal agencies to return sacred objects and human remains to the nations to which they belong. Native American Language Act officially reverses the government's policy of suppressing American Indian culture and language.

1994	Amendment of the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act protects the use of peyote for religious purposes.
1999	*The Red Star appears in the Umbral skies; a cub is born of two metis parents.*
2002	*Call goes out for great council of Uktena to meet to discuss portents such as the Red Star and the tribe's response to omens of disaster.*





Chapter Two: Feathered Dances, Hidden Hearts

He was merely the sound of something ponderous,
swimming in a dark river.
He was a shattered tree,
A dislodged boulder thundering down Gahuti,
The scream of a dying animal on a distant mountain.
But no one saw him
for... to see him was to die.
— Gary Carden, *The Uktena*

First Words

Erishka stretched as she settled into another well-worn seat. She'd dreamed of the mountains before, though she'd never seen them in person. Vaguely, she recalled that the Appalachians were some of the oldest hills in the world. The girl felt an odd thrumming in her heart, an eagerness to see the ancient mountains and meet the people who lived there.

Erishka's Notebook

More buses! The smell of diesel exhaust and Lysol fumes is starting to get on my nerves. Today we headed north, towards the Great Smoky Mountains. I'd never seen hills like these, or at least I didn't think I had. But when my feet touched the soil, memories came of smelling fir trees and hearing the sounds of water trickling, almost frozen, over old stones. These mountains are ancient, worn to nubs compared to what they were. The people we're going to meet are Cherokee. I've met a few from time to time, but not since the Change. It will be different seeing them with werewolf eyes.

The pair hadn't expected anyone to be waiting, and they'd been ready to walk the few miles to the sept. The hot summer hadn't penetrated the mountains, and a breeze blew up to greet them. Still, when the station emptied, a woman remained. She noticed Erishka and came straight over.

"You must be the guests I was told to expect," said the woman, in a soft voice.

"Expect?" asked Erishka, confused. "Uh, well, I guess. We're here to see a guy named Charlie Hicks."

"I know," the woman replied. "I'm Mary. I knew to come meet you." Erishka gave her a good once over. She couldn't have been more than 20 or so, tall and slender, wearing a gauzy peasant skirt in bright jewel stripes with a matching blouse. Erishka couldn't be sure, but she thought she saw a ribbon-like tattoo spiral up Mary's left leg, azure scales outlined in black. "I've got a car out front. If you're coming." Erishka nodded, and Jolon, who hadn't said a

word, switched his pack to the other shoulder and followed their hostess out to her tiny Escort.

"So you must be a homid," said Erishka, by way of making conversation. "Can't imagine a lupus driving a car."

Mary seemed to pause a moment, then replied, "Well, I know a few who can. But no, I'm not homid, or lupus. Both my parents were Garou. And I couldn't smell you if you'd wallowed in Wyrm shit for a few days." Erishka felt her face flush, and stole a glance at Jolon, but he seemed distracted by the view. The drive took Erishka's breath away. She had no idea the forest could be so beautiful, and now, her senses sharper than ever, she breathed it in joyfully from her perch in the back seat, window rolled down. Mary respected the moment and didn't say anything until they turned off on a twisty road.

"Wish I could do that," she sighed, wistfully. "That's one thing I do miss, but I guess there are worse curses."

"Uktena has another purpose for you, obviously," murmured Jolon. Mary's shoulders tightened, and for a brief instant, Erishka saw another piece of the tattoo, snaking over the woman's right shoulder, peeking out from under the loose blouse. Then it was gone.

The drive was a long one, but finally they topped a hill and dipped into a valley, covered in fog despite the sunny day. Pulling up to a log ranch house, Erishka saw a small group waiting: a good-looking man of medium build, a woman with a smile of welcome and a small charcoal gray wolf. She gathered her courage before getting out of the car and dipping her head in a respectful nod.

"Hello. I'm Erishka, Half Moon."

The handsome man offered her a slight inclination of the head. "Welcome, young Half Moon, and to you as well." He gave a small bow to Jolon, a courtesy not usually offered to Kinfolk. "This is the Sept of the Glass Hand, and the packs of Valley Smoke and Red Creek give you leave to enter. I am Truth-of-Morning, called Charlie by my Kin of the People. This is Nancy Holds-Back-the-Shadow, a Crescent Moon, and Wind-in-the-Spruce, our Songkeeper." They all went into the house where cold tea and fresh fry bread waited.

"If you'll excuse us, Erishka, I know our other guest has news to share with Mary and me. Nancy and Wind-in-the-Spruce will stay." They left as Nancy began filling glasses and laying out bread.

"Where are you from?" asked the Crescent Moon, after she took a long swig of tea. She pushed her short black hair behind her ears, sitting down a bit stiffly in the closest chair.

"Oh, down near the Gulf Coast," Erishka replied, looking around the big open living area. Cherokee baskets and rugs tastefully decorated the place, but it was still decidedly bare of furnishings. "Nice place you got here."

"Thanks," smiled Nancy. "It's home to us, off and on. Even Wind-in-the-Spruce likes it."

The wolf gave a grin as he lay down on a rug, enjoying a piece of the fry bread. "Good," he said after a moment. "Must make more."

Nancy laughed. "Good thing cornmeal's cheap. Well, it's nice to meet someone from closer to the water. Have you visited a lot of other septs?"

"A few," answered the girl, "but I know we've got a long way to go."

"Ah. Well, that's the way of our tribe. We're a real mixed bag. But you probably already knew that."

"Sort of. Honestly, I wouldn't mind knowing a bit more. All Uktena aren't Indian, I realize that. But who decides who we are?"

Our Present, Our Selves

Nancy thought about that a moment. "That's a good question. I would say that more than some tribes, like the Red Talons or even Younger Brother, we are willing to adapt and change. True, we chose not to accept Wyrmbringers as Kin, but even that may not always be true. Many Uktena were glad when we welcomed the others who had been oppressed or become victims of tyranny. I think the Uktena are always shifting, always changing, and that is what keeps us strong, making us able to see places no one else can see, touch what no one else dares to touch."

"Not unlike ripples of water, or waves on the sand. Never are two the same. There is power in the difference." added Wind-in-the-Spruce. Erishka marveled that she could understand his words so clearly in the lupus tongue. Then she remembered that he was a Songkeeper and realized his eloquent speech arose from that birthright.

Rites of Passage

"Take an Uktena's Rite of Passage," said Nancy.

"Rite of Passage?" asked Erishka. "When I changed into a werewolf for the first time?"

"No, I mean your Rite of Passage, when you undertake a challenge and get your Garou name. No two youngsters are going to have the same rite. The Crescent Moons take this most seriously. Usually, the ritual has something to do with acquiring a piece of previously unknown knowledge, but depending on the cub and her moon, gathering such knowledge might require brute force, clever trickery or a mix of the two. Sometimes it could be as straightforward as finding the answer to a single question, or bringing back a question without an answer. To repeat something that has been done before gives us no new knowledge. Believe me, ritemasters generally work long and hard to create meaningful Rites of Passage. This is one of the most solemn tasks we have. The initiation of the young touches the future, but it also binds us to the past and our long history."

Kinfolk Relations

"Another way we stay strong is through nurturing our Kinfolk," continued Nancy.

"Oh, like letting Jolon come with me on this trip," said Erishka. Nancy fell silent a moment, and Wind-in-the-Spruce continued.

"Yes, sharing experiences with Kin strengthens our bonds. We do this through dance, song and rhyme. With the great variety of Kinfolk we have welcomed over the years, our music has swelled in beauty, as the Songkeeper's moon. We love our Kin and keep them close. We learn from them as well, and in turn, they help protect our secrets."

Nancy had drained her glass. "We are honored to have many of the First People among our Kin, including Cherokee, Choctaw, Seminole, Chickasaw and Creek from the east as well as Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, Pueblo and Ute. Although most of the Indians of the northern lands have bonds with Younger Brother, occasionally we find relations among them as well. We also recognize the ties with the descendents of the ancient tribes of the Yucatan, such as the Mayans and Aztecs, and the children of ancestors from Africa who settled the Sea Islands along the eastern coast. Our Gullah and Geechee Kin are every bit as much part of the tribe as those born on a reservation somewhere. And our views on Kin have changed over the years. Used to be we only had Indian Kinfolk, but we've welcomed more diversity among our relatives over the years. I'd bet we have Kin from nearly every continent, any tribe with at least a scrap of their old lore to hold on to. Only the Intruders from Europe have been deliberately excluded—that's an old score I don't think will ever be settled."

"My father's ancestors were Creole," Erishka said, "though you wouldn't know it to look at him."

Wind-in-the-Spruce stood and stretched. "Gaia knows that it is the heart and soul, not the hide, that matters. My fur is gray, the Crescent Moon's is black. We both serve, as do our Kin. That is what Gaia sees."

"Speaking of fur," asked Erishka as she munched, "What about our wolf Kin?"

Nancy nodded approvingly, "You'll be a fine Half Moon — you look for the balance. Sadly, it's harder to keep our wolf side healthy. Lands that make for good wolf-range also make for good ranches, farms and subdivisions. There are packs scattered all around, but mostly in the west. We have to keep close tabs on every pack, to make sure they don't catch the eye of a rancher or suburbanite." She chuckled to herself. "Or biologist for that matter. In some ways they're worse. They don't just shoot and forget, they collar the poor things, snoop around and alert other scientists of the "lost populations" of wolves being where they shouldn't."

Caerns and Septs

Erishka passed the rest of the day helping Nancy and Wind-in-the-Spruce scour the bawn. A few other members of the sept came around to say hello, but for the most part, only the wolf and Nancy stayed close.

"It's an honor to help you," said Erishka, after they'd finished an initial patrol. "I didn't know I'd be allowed to visit someone else's caern."

Nancy's muscles rippled as her body lengthened, her loose-fitting clothes becoming tighter. She carried a few large river rocks to the edge of the bawn, stopping for a moment with eyes closed and nose high to catch the scent of the fog that drifted lazily around. "Not all visitors come to the caern," she replied, her voice gruff and husky. "But you are different." She didn't say anything else about that, leaving Erishka to wonder. Nancy set down the rocks in what seemed to be a ritual pattern.

"Er, well, is this a pretty typical Uktena caern?" asked the girl.

The Crescent Moon lifted an eyebrow. "What do you feel? Is it like your sept's caern? Sit, be silent, and tell me what touches your mind."

Damn, I'm no touchy feely type, thought Erishka, but she did as she was told. She fidgeted a bit. Time passed, and then... she had no other way to describe it... the fog swallowed her.

Cold, wet, drowning! Panic seized her, but then she realized that she could breathe after all.

Young Half-Moon, you wear your skin uneasily, a chill voice whispered. *You see, yet you are blind to the truth before your eyes. What do you bring here?*

Erishka thought about this carefully. *I bring myself. I bring our Kin. I wish to learn of my people*, she replied.

The spirit voice laughed, a sound like bubbling water on a hot fire. *To learn of an Uktena caern is to face fear, to know of the hearts of darkness deep beneath the earth. Watch, and discover.*

Images flashed into her mind, burning. She saw ancestors in wolf form and in human, fighting a giant beast from the outer reaches of the spirit lands, grotesque with cruel wisdom in its many eyes. The People wrestled it to the ground and bound it with many spells before enclosing it in dirt and water, finally building stones all around. Erishka saw this same story many times, each creature more fell than the last, each generation of the tribe renewing the battle and the wards around the attacking Wyrmspawn. As she became accustomed to the visions, the Half Moon saw that though each story had different faces, the tasks remained the same. Always, strong warriors guarded the caerns and led the fight to subdue the enemy. Songkeepers stirred the hearts of all assembled with their music, even as they danced into the fray. A Crescent Moon called to the spirits to aid and protect the place, and lend aid to the assembled packs as they fought. He, or she, depending on the tale, also sated the spirits' desires for recognition and naming. Here and there, No Moons darted in and among the enemies, stabbing their flesh, delivering stinging blows, even bearing their fallen comrades away into the mist.

Finally, in almost every tale, Erishka saw a Half Moon standing in the center of all things, guiding, encouraging, not hanging back from the fight, but directing its course alongside the Full Moons. Only when many of these creatures had killed or been killed, and many versions of the story told, did the werewolves end the fight. They buried their dead and every turn of the moon, renewed the wards of secrecy among their caerns. They spoke to each other in soft whispers, sharing secrets she could not hear. A shudder passed through the girl as mists clouded in front of her eyes.

Now you know the truth that is not so pretty, the fog whispered, as the last vision faded. *Do not speak of it, even to your own kind.*

I won't, she swore, *I won't*, and as if she emerged from cold water, Erishka gasped for air and shook herself awake. Her limbs ached, and joints creaked. Nancy sat nearby, resting against a pile of moss-covered stones. She put a finger to her lips and shook her head.

"I don't need to know," she murmured. "Fog has given you something, and it is for you alone. The moot will start at dusk, so better grab some rest beforehand." The Half Moon nodded, too troubled to sleep, too numbed to do anything else.

Moots and Gatherings

The drums began softly at first, a steady, slow rhythm of fingers against taut leather. Then, a wooden flute joined in a haunting melody. Erishka just listened, letting the sounds pass over and through her, down into the valley of fog that surrounded the caern and the assembled sept. There, the notes mingled with the opening howls that still echoed, and in the distance, she heard the roar of waterfalls. The noise both haunted her and stirred memories, as if she'd done this many times before. Wind-in-the-Spruce's howl lasted the longest, and as his voice fell to silence, Nancy stood up. She whispered, but the dusk near night was so still, her voice seemed loud and strong.

"Water and wind, we welcome you. Sky and darkness, we thank you for protecting us. The rivers that flow around us, keep us safe and hidden. We give our tears and sorrows to the water, to hold our secrets, our dreams, our hopes." Nancy tossed some brightly colored stones into the stream that ran at her feet. "Fog, I am she who Holds-Back-the-Shadow. I share a secret with you and ask your blessing and presence at this moot." She began speaking in a tongue Erishka didn't understand, in a voice that quickly dropped too low to hear even with the keen senses of a wolf.

One by one, each werewolf came forward, took a colored stone from Nancy, and threw it into the pool, all saying something as the rocks hit the water. First was Charlie, then Wind-in-the-Spruce, followed by a scarred and pale metis in war form, a wolf missing part of a paw and several others she'd not met. With each secret, the splash of water drowned out the speaker's voice for just a moment. Finally, as the last werewolf, Mary who'd met them in town, tossed in her stone, Erishka felt cold creep steadily and deeply into her bones. Nancy smiled with joy as the totem stirred among them, and looked to Charlie to begin Cracking the Bone. He stood and spoke.

"We hold this moot to welcome our visitors from the lands of our cousins." He held out a leather pouch to Erishka. "For your journeys ahead."

She stood and bowed her head, thankful Grandmother had given her various items to present as gifts. From the knapsack at her feet, she pulled out several coils of reed that she'd cut and dyed herself. "We thank you for your welcome, and from my family, accept this basket reed, dyed red with the aid of the cochineal bug, to bring success and triumph to your caern."

Councils

In addition to regular moots, Uktena also have councils. Typically, these meetings involve the elders of a sept (or several neighboring septs) and address matters that concern the protectorate or local region. These are solemn, formal occasions. Any Uktena may attend, but usually only the elders speak; they do so in turn, wielding some sort of sacred object to show that it is their time to talk. Depending on those present, this object could be a stick, a pipe, a basket or even a piece of pottery. The object is passed on from speaker to speaker, until everyone who wants to speak has done so. On the other hand, no one takes a turn at speaking lightly. If you want to talk, you'd better have something important to say.

Four times a year, in spring, summer, fall and winter, Great Councils are held. These are even wider in scope and participation, and deal with matters that affect the entire tribe. To an outsider's eyes, nothing seems to get accomplished except for a lot of talk. This is a false perception. In fact, the Great Councils promote an astonishing blend of both unity and individuality among the septs. Granted, most "go their own way" once they return to their homes, but at least, the Uktena know what others in their tribe are doing. Not many Garou can make such a claim.

Charlie took it. "I thank you, young one. Now sit and enjoy the stories and dances of my people, and take freely of the food from our table."

Erishka nodded. Behind her, Jolon sat silent and apart, watching and taking in the sights and sounds. As a few sept members stood to tell tales of various quests, she saw he paid close attention, soaking it all in. When the dancing began, he moved closer to the creek, dipping his hands in the cold, clear water.

Curious, thought Erishka, as she saw each sept member approach him at various times and murmur something in his ear. *I wonder if he wasn't supposed to be here.* But he didn't leave, and she didn't think he was being scolded.

As dusk began to move to full darkness, a few women began laying out bread, honey and coffee, and the assembled crowd ate its fill. Charlie introduced her to his wife and a few of the other Kin before the werewolves once again assembled in a circle. Wind-in-the-Spruce again lifted his voice in a howl, but this one was so sad, so painful, Erishka felt tears flowing down her cheeks.

"He cries for Middle Brother," said Nancy softly. "The Croatan are lost, and this is a secret you should know. They gave their lives, their very essence, to stop the Eater-of-Souls from devouring the worlds. We remember their sacrifice and courage, always." Erishka had *known* of the sacrifice from the history lesson in Florida, but in hearing the achingly beautiful voice she began to *understand*.

Camps and Societies

As the final howls of the moot died into misty echoes, Wind-in-the-Spruce cocked his head at Erishka, then walked away from the bawn. She followed for a long while, as the mountain path twisted and rounded through thick trees. Finally, they stood on a ridge, looking down into the valley below. Wind-in-the-Spruce shrugged his shoulders and limbs, and momentarily, a gangly youth with long loose black hair stood beside her.

"Sometimes, this way is easier to talk," he explained. "I brought you here to teach you of the camps and secret circles within the Uktena. You will only hear this once, so you must remember. As a Moon Dancer, I know these things by heart. As a Half Moon, you must be the one to decide how to use what I tell you wisely, when to speak of it, when to keep it deep within your heart. I have no doubt you will meet people from these groups we call camps and societies, but whether you choose to accept their offers or not must be for you to decide."

"Um, okay," replied Erishka. "But what exactly is a camp?"

"They are groups of like-minded Uktena who bind themselves together in search of certain secrets. Each camp has a particular focus, seeking a specific kind of knowledge. Some wish to explore only the secrets of the material world; others look to the spirit lands or even places that should remain hidden. Some call themselves camps; others prefer to be titled 'secret societies,' which I find quite amusing! If the society is secret, then why have I heard of it? But heed what I say, and remember."

Earth Guides

"The Earth Guides, as their name implies, give their attentions to the world around us, the one we can see, feel and taste. They are particularly fond of human lore, but they also collect the stories of the lupus, Kinfolk and other Changers. They are among the oldest of the camps, and their collection of knowledge is immense. Anything that humans consider 'culture,' such as dances, poetry, song, arts, craft, even religion, the Earth Guides collect and study. Multiply this kind of knowledge by every group we call Kin, and you will see the power of their understanding. Among two-legged Earth Guides, you will find those who promote this awareness among Kin and other humans — what you call activists, I believe. They are also some of our best teachers, remembering ancient rituals and ceremonies that others have long forgotten."

"If they have a flaw, it is that the Earth Guides become too caught up in their discoveries, to the detriment of living in the now. While I respect their wisdom, and as a Moon Dancer, I admire their preservation of the past, I am disturbed that they have no interest in finding new ways and untrodden paths." Erishka nodded, and the Moon Dancer continued.

Skywalkers

"The Skywalkers are a reflection of Earth Guides in many ways, yet their interests lie on the other side of a mirrored pool. Their lore is that of the vast array of spirits. Many Crescent Moons are among the Skywalkers, but they are not alone in their fascination with the lands beyond and the creatures that live there. Many No Moons and Moon Dancers have delved into the long paths and brought back unheard-of knowledge. Any auspice may undertake a vision quest into the Umbra, of course. Often, spirits like to talk, and one clever enough to win their favor gains much in return. Perhaps the most important task the Skywalkers now face is puzzling out the riddle of Anthelios."

"What's that?" asked Erishka, hoping to learn more than Cows-the-Gator told.

Wind-in-the-Spruce shook his head worriedly. "No one knows exactly. It appears as a red star in the horizon of the spirit world, but certain prophecies seem to tell that its coming marks the approach of the End Times, the last days of this world. I feel in my heart that the Skywalkers may be the best ones to tell us if this is so. Yet I fear that they may stray too far and let loose a scourge that is unforeseen. It has happened before, in their searches of the spirit world, that something follows them home. Then, the rest of us have to battle it unto death — either it perishes, or we do."

Bane Tenders

"A similar problem follows those we call Bane Tenders. As their name implies, they watch over the powerful spawn of Grandfather Serpent, which we Uktena have bound into the earth for safekeeping."

"I heard something like this before," said Erishka slowly, "but I don't understand why we... "

"We did it to protect the Pure Lands, and we would do so again if the need arose," replied the lupus, sharply. "Only the strongest and bravest join the Bane Tenders, for it is a difficult task to spend all your waking moments remaining vigilant. The members of this camp also seek out the darkest lore of Grandfather Serpent's forces, believing that knowledge of a thing gives strength to fight it." He shrugged. "I am not so sure. There is the thinnest of lines between understanding and becoming. Some have crossed that line, though fortunately, other Uktena are careful to... ah... test the Bane Tenders from time to time. Naturally, they resent this and believe they are unappreciated. Perhaps that is true. Certainly once an Uktena becomes a Bane Tender, his life and sanity are shortened, for they see things of the darkness we cannot begin to imagine. If a Bane Tender comes to us, we tend to take their words seriously. Better to be a bit paranoid than caught unawares."

Children of Wyld

"You know of the Triat, of course, the three forces of Wyrm, Weaver and Wyld that exert great influence over Gaia and all that exists. Consider this — that if the Bane Tenders seek to learn the secrets of the Wyrm and how to control it, there are likewise groups who do the same with the Weaver and the Wyld."

"Those werewolves who fully embrace the chaos, turmoil and disorder of Grandmother Smoke we name Children of the Wyld, or sometimes simply Wyld Children. Many go beyond trying to merely understand the Wyld's primal forces and seek to become one with its madness. This is not as foolhardy as it sounds! Some Wyld Children believe that by joining this force, they can heal the rifts in the Triat. Others think that Grandmother Smoke needs to be saved from its own reckless ways, and an alliance with the spirits that serve the Wyld will achieve this goal."

"That's more or less what I know of the Triat; things are out of balance, and the Wyld's forces are doing more harm than good," Erishka agreed.

"True, true," nodded Wind-in-the-Spruce. "But the situation is much more complex than that. We werewolves are protectors of the Wyld, as I have said. Yet in some ways, it is a mindless ally. The Wyld Children may disagree with me, but I believe that Grandmother Smoke is not so self-aware. It is *reacting* to events, not necessarily creating them. Even the plagues and earthquakes that come from its vastness are responses to the pain it feels. It must be difficult to serve a power that is heedless of the bedlam it spawns. Still, the Children of the Wyld possess some of the deepest knowledge and understanding of the spirits and the lands beyond of any Uktena, because they have been to hidden realms of Grandmother Smoke and heard many of its stories and secrets."

Web Walkers

"Grandfather Spider's followers among the Uktena take the name Web Walkers, possibly adopted from the Glass Walkers, whom they tend to treat as close allies. While not all are urban, many Web Walkers do choose to live in or close to large cities. They revel in technology, but still treat it as a servant rather than their master. Why are they drawn to the Weaver? I think for many of the same reasons other Uktena feel the connection to the Wyld or, dare I say it, the Wyrm. Some seek understanding, others seek healing."

"Not to mention that with all the humans living in cities, there may be a connection with Kin," added Erishka.

"Yes, you are exactly right!" the lupus replied, with an admiring nod. "These Web Walkers have indeed located lost Kin for us among the city dwellers, and perhaps, an unknown cub here and there. Also, with Grandfather Spider's aid, the Web Walkers are sometimes able to sniff out the worst Wyrm infestations in the city. But their most important task remains gathering information and lore on the Weaver itself. What better place than the cities for this task? I admit, my understanding of technology is limited since I did not grow up with it. But Web Walkers I have met tell me of wonders they have seen in the city Umbrascapes. It is tempting to visit and see what they have discovered."

Ghost Dancers

The moon was high overhead by this time, but Wind-in-the-Spruce gave a long cry before speaking again. "I mourn again for Middle Brother who is lost. There is a group among us and among Younger Brother, Wendigo, who make their sacred duty the preservation of the Croatan's memory. Not only do they purify the lands in remembrance of those who died, they also seek to find any stories and songs that remain of Middle Brother."

"Any link to the Ghost Dance taught by Wovoka back in the late 1800s?" asked Erishka. "I mean, the whole point of that ritual was to purify and revitalize the land that Wyrmbringers had corrupted, right?"

"I am not sure those who first performed the Ghost Dance would use quite the same words," replied Wind-in-the-Spruce with a grim smile, "but yes, the tradition comes from the same roots. It was originally a rite of our Paiute Kin, but the Ghost Dance has become a powerful symbol for all descended from the Pure Ones. The Uktena Ghost Dancers, like those long-dead victims of the Indian Wars, believe that making the land whole and clean is far more important than sounding the drums of war, as Little Brother does." He sighed. "For many years now, Uktena Ghost Dancers have preserved this ceremony and the stories of those who have fallen to protect it. I hope that the more bloodthirsty members among the Wendigo do not sway the newest initiates into altering what has long stood for peace into a cry for war."

Scouts

"Less troubled are a group of Uktena simply called the Scouts. They are almost exactly what their name implies — seekers of information and knowledge who in ages past roamed ahead of the packs and brought back wisdom and learning about new places in both the waking lands and the Umbra. Now, they often act as messengers, and most are highly respected for their willingness to keep us connected, now that we Uktena are scattered so far and wide. Some serve the Medicine Workers as heralds to the spirits. Others see to the needs of the lonely Bane Tenders."

"I think the Scouts must have a pretty good deal going!" said the girl. "I mean, I've learned a lot just from visiting a handful of different septs."

"Perhaps," the lupus smiled. "However, not a few werewolves scorn the Scouts for their wanderings, suggesting that without a permanent pack or sept, they are not following their natures. Some Scouts have sidestepped this problem by forming questing packs."

"What are those?" asked Erishka.

"One of the legends of the End Times is that more and more packs will undertake difficult quests," replied Wind-in-the-Spruce. "Some Scouts have started working together to uncover lost spirits and long-forgotten lore. A few I've heard are even seeking totem spirits that have vanished to the deepest Umbra or elsewhere. I wish them well, for it is a daunting task."

Raiders

"But not all of the Scouts have had such honorable intentions over time," continued the lupus, a sad note in his voice. "A branch of the Scouts, calling themselves the Raiders, takes the mission of gathering information too far. I have no doubt their original intentions were good, but now... They seek out lost fetishes, talens and any items of power they can find. For the well being of the tribe? No, to hoard in their septs and the secret places of the earth. I imagine no one alive today could envision the hidden shrines and treasure troves the Raiders have built over the years. The worst part is this — they say they destroy anything that is Wyrm-infested, but is this still true? Since they reveal nothing, not even to the Medicine Workers, we have little reason to trust them."

"They sound, well, kind of creepy," Erishka muttered.

"They are that, indeed," agreed Wind-in-the-Spruce. "And some stories even accuse them of killing those who ask too many questions or go searching for their hidden shrines. Instead of sharing knowledge and helping all the Uktena prepare to face the dangers, they distrust everyone and suffocate the tribe with their dark secrets. They are why some other tribes find all Uktena 'creepy,' as you say."

Path Dancers

"Another group is unsettling, but I believe their intentions are more noble than the Raiders. They call themselves Path Dancers, and although not clear to outsiders, they seem to have a personal link with the Great Uktena. The Path Dancers are known as commanding mystics who use Gifts and rituals unfamiliar to all other Uktena. They are very selective about who they choose to join their circle. A prospective member must pass some sort of initiation, and if the werewolf fails, she cannot recall any memories of her time with the Path Dancers."

"Sounds sort of like mind control or something," said Erishka. "So how are these folks a benefit if they're so mysterious?"

"It is true that their ways may seem threatening to outsiders; a few say they dabble with Grandfather Serpent, but I do not believe this is true. Rather, I think Uktena may have blessed them in a way we outsiders cannot understand. I imagine them as unique, but they are still our brethren."

Society of the Bitter Frost

"Alas, I cannot say the same for the last group whose story I must speak. They were called the Society of the Bitter Frost, and it is a certainty that they have fallen into darkness."

"Why?" asked the girl. "What on earth could make werewolves, any of us, turn to the Wyrm?"

"Hatred was part of the reason. Many of us bear no love for the Wyrmbringers and Wyrmcomers, but those of the Bitter Frost let their hate consume them. They struck out and slaughtered human and Garou alike. But there is another reason, a secret of the Moon Dancers I will share with you. Long ago, those who danced the Black Spiral came to the Uktena. We were dark of mind in those days, for both our human and wolf Kin had been slaughtered in great

numbers. Our lands were being taken and corrupted, and we could do nothing against the weapons and sheer numbers of Wyrmbringers that came to our lands. The Spirals spoke with our Lawgivers and offered us another path. Many of the Uktena listened and learned, but it was a clever trick. Once we had heard what the Black Spirals had to say, we slaughtered them all. Never did we once consider taking their offer; we only listened to gain the weapon of knowledge to use against their kind. Or so we Moon Dancers thought.

"We were wrong, it seems, for some among the Bitter Frost *did* accept what was offered, as they envied the power Grandfather Serpent gave the Black Spirals. It took many years for this story to be told in full. But threads of the tale became clearer with time. At first, we heard only rumors, that members of the Society of the Bitter Frost had slain Wyrmcomers, not in the distant past, but here in the later days. Then, some of the Earth Guides began to speak in moots, declaring that those of the Bitter Frost smelled tainted and foul. Last, many of us saw the worst among them using tools of Grandfather Serpent. The proof was too strong, and at our last great moot, the elders declared the Society to be outcasts." He bent his head. "A sad path for any of us to follow in these dark times." Neither of them said anything for a time, but then Wind-in-the-Spruce stretched and shrank in quick motion.

"Now," said the lupus, standing before her again on four legs, "we return to the bawn. You have heard my tales, and I have shared a secret with you. But now, you must pass my test. Which camp am I, and why?" He wore a grin, but beneath it, his teeth glinted sharp and white.

Erishka grinned in kind. "I'd been wondering that, to tell you the truth. But I think I know the answer. You're a damn good teacher, and you seem to know an *awful* lot of information. At first, I thought you might be a Scout, but then I started thinking about how beautifully you speak. It's not just a Galliard thing, either; your voice comes from understanding how people — and werewolves, apparently — think. Only an Earth Guide could do so well. And you weren't afraid to be critical of them, either, with all that stuff about looking for new paths. So, that's my guess."

Wind-in-the-Spruce threw back his head and let out a quick, joyful howl.

Different Currents

"Although I am sometimes considered a knowledgeable and wise Songkeeper, my voice is just one among many. Other Uktena have quite a different take on all the camps and secret societies. Hear now the views of others I have heard expressed in my travels."

Some say we're too arrogant and too tied to the past, heedless of the future. Well, I can counter that easily enough. If it wasn't for us keeping our links with ancestors and old ways strong, we'd not have a clue about a few important rites, such as, oh, how some of the worst of Grandfather Serpent's brood were banished. The others should think on that next time they're tempted to criticize how we do things.

— Luisa Santos, Earth Guide

The world has many realities, and we are among those who have seen Gaia's face in countless places and times. Our allies are the spirits, and among all the Uktena, we revel in our own dual souls.

— Michael Hawk, Skywalker

It's a thankless and lonely job, but someone has to do it. Don't bother becoming one of us if you can't handle the isolation... and the fear in people's eyes when we come around.

— Kafele Brightstone, Bane Tender

Yes, the Wyld possesses much fury, but it is also beautiful in its danger. Doesn't a coming storm make your fur stand on end? Respect the Wyld, and recognize its rage within you.

— Crash of Thunder, Wyld Child

The cities are the way of the future. Like it or not, that's where we'll make our final stand in the Apocalypse. Any werewolves who purposely ignore the constantly growing urban sprawl are a bunch of fools.

— Carla Codex, Web Walker

Our long-dead friends and Kin found a remarkable bond in the Ghost Dance. By remembering them, we create even closer ties with their descendents.

— Tolikna, Ghost Dancer

Sure, I deliver messages, but the pony express is long gone. I'm more of an ambassador at large than a werewolf postal service.

— Julita Lauros, Scout

What are you talking about? There's no such thing as a secret cache of ancient artifacts anywhere on this earth — or in any other realm, for that matter. You've been listening to too many peyote-induced Moon Dancer tales.

— Iwone Sharpspear, Raider

By our own laws, I can't tell you our purpose. But I can say that Uktena guides us in our mission, as he does all our tribe. Trust me when I say it is best you don't know any more than this.

— Jon Nakai, Path Dancer

We are hated because we did what was both necessary and difficult. To end the Wyrmcomer and Wyrmbringer scourge, we needed the power to enforce our will. We were clever enough to know where to find it.

— Neronss, Society of the Bitter Frost

"These are the voices of others among us, many accounted wise in their way. You have listened well, and must make up your own mind which path you will follow," Wind-in-the-Spruce remarked. "Come, then, young Lawgiver. No need to teach you more lessons for now."

Totems and Laws

Erishka gave the Amtrak car a dubious look, but Jolon seemed to think it was a better bet than riding the bus across four-fifths of the country. At least it was less crowded, and no one sang half-drunken songs or threw apples or did any of the crazy stuff she'd seen on the buses.

Erishka's Notebook

...and the train dumped us out at yet another forlorn-looking place, this time in the desert country of Arizona. I thought

Colloquialisms

The Uktena, through acquiring Kin from various cultures over the years, have a number of names and vernacular words which may be unfamiliar to other tribes, and most mix and match the words in their speech. These include:

First People, Pure Ones: Humans who first settled Turtle Island, and their descendents

Ghost: A restless spirit or a wraith

Grandfather Serpent: The Wyrm

Grandfather Spider: The Weaver

Grandmother Smoke: The Wyld (Note that the "gender" of the Triat may vary depending on where the speaker learned the old tales).

Great Mother: Gaia

Haole, washishu, belagaana: Outsiders, usually those of European ancestry. Although these terms come from various human languages, the Uktena have adopted their use as well

Nunnehi: Faeries native to the Americas, but also a catchall term for fae

Moondancer: Galliard

Peacemaker, Peaceleader, Lawgiver, Kumu: Philodox

Shaman, Medicine Worker, Kahuna: Theurge, but also a term of respect for mages who work with the Uktena

Trickster, Questioner: Ragabash

Turtle Island: North and Central America

Warleader, Warrior, Ali'i: Ahroun

Witches: Mages, particularly those who are motivated by greed and thirst for power

Wyrmcomer: European werewolves who came to America, and their descendents

Wyrmbringer: Human European colonists and their descendents

we'd never reach the sept, but finally, about a day later, we did. I'd never met the Diné before, but they made us welcome. Tonight, I've been invited to join one of the packs as they make a journey into the spirit lands. I'm eager to see what this place looks like on the other side. Jolon said he's meeting with some of the Kinfolk while I'm gone.

Spirit Relations

"Hold still, dammit!" snapped Rosie, as she snipped a suture. "Or else I'll give you enough painkillers to knock even you on your ass."

Josh Creek grumbled, but stopped squirming long enough for his wife to finish her work. Erishka suppressed a grin. For Kin, Rosie was gutsy and outspoken, and Erishka liked that. She was an interesting contrast to her husband, a huge man who seemed remarkably quiet and contemplative for a Warrior. Rosie hadn't batted an eye when the pack had stumbled into the couple's modest ranch house. She'd just gotten her bag from the kitchen and set to work. Erishka imagined this wasn't the first time bloodied werewolves had crossed the threshold. The large bedroom where they rested had a couple of spare pallets in addition to the two beds.

"It doesn't hurt," answered Josh, sulkily, "but I need to talk to Threepaws and the others, let 'em know what happened."

"No need," said another woman, resting on a pallet nearby. She was pale despite her olive-toned skin, almost fragile looking with her damp dark hair hanging in her face, but much more alive than when the pack had returned from their hunt. "I asked one of the water spirits to carry a message for us. Threepaws knows where we are, and that the sept is safe now." Ellen had been the one who discovered the Spirals trailing their pack in the Umbra, and she'd borne the brunt of their first assault. Her pack leader, Josh, along with Erishka and a metis New Moon called Natesa had managed to kill the enemy, though not without plenty of wounds. Rosie had checked everyone out, taken care of the worst injuries and then let the Great Mother do the rest.

"Okay," said Rosie, giving them all a last once over. "Today, you rest. Doctor's orders! I'll get Beth to bring up some food." Josh nodded for all of them, and Rosie left the bedroom after a last stern look.

Ellen waited a few moments, then rose and shut the door. Sitting cross-legged, she emptied five small piles of cornmeal, in colors of white, black, green, red and yellow onto the wood floor.

"The setting sun in the west reminds us of the heat of an ember," the Theurge intoned. "It cuts through the heart of our enemies with one sure stroke. We hear the death cries of our foes and rejoice for our victory." Ellen traced a symbol in the white meal.

"Is she doing a sand painting?" Erishka whispered to Natesa, who was in human form, watching quietly. The Philodox tried not to stare at the metis' solid white left eye that seemed not to move in its socket.

The New Moon shook her head. "No, that is a ritual of our human cousins, one most dear to them. This is the Changer way. It is similar, but different. Besides, most of Ellen's ancestors came from Vietnam. They don't do Indian rituals there, you know." Erishka accepted that news in silence, as the Theurge spoke again.

"Roadrunner lent me his cunning this past night. If not for his keen eyes and quick wits that guided me, I would not have seen the danger to our caern. I thank our totem for showing me the enemy in the darkness, for putting fire in my heart to carry on our fight." Ellen traced another symbol, this time in the red meal, and bowed deeply.

Josh knelt beside Ellen, and traced a sign in the yellow meal. "I give my thanks to Bear, the totem of my wife's clan, for her skills in healing. Thanks to her, we are strong again, ready

to fight our enemies and discover new secrets. Bear is wise and steady. He sees balance in the paths of the earth and gifts us with this understanding."

Slowly, Natesa limped over to the piles of meal, though she didn't touch anything. "Lizard and Coyote the Trickster are brothers, though they tear at each other's healing wounds. When the dark ones assaulted us, it was the Horned Lizard who inspired me to fight, even as my blood spilled hot in the spirit lands. I thank Lizard for guiding my hand this night."

Erishka instinctively knew it was her turn, and she said the first thing that came to mind. "Turkey helped me begin this quest for wisdom and secrets. So, um, I thank that totem for opening a path before my feet."

Ellen nodded, and then carefully swept the meal into a large pile. "Uktena and the others have all given us their wisdom. There was pain in our discovery, but insight seldom comes without a price. We found an enemy that was hidden. That was worth the injury to our flesh." She scooped up the cornmeal and deftly placed it in a blue leather pouch at her waist. Erishka palpably felt a cool wind stir in the room, but it vanished almost as soon as it appeared. The Crescent Moon nodded again, seemingly pleased. Josh saw the puzzled look on their visitor's face.

"Spirits like to be remembered and named," he explained "as well as given honor through the process of chiminage. While Uktena, the One Who Unlocks Secrets, is the totem of our tribe, we've got a number of other allies, too. Roadrunner is our sept totem, but a lot of us have personal totems. Rosie's family reveres Bear, who is a protector and healer of great strength, and I honor the guardian of her people. Frog is a symbol of renewal and change, as he moves from tadpole to full-grown adult. Lizard is renowned as a knower of secrets, and all four of these totems have connections to water, a link to Uktena. Either they live in the water, or they use water for catching fish to eat or to replenish their bodies. Roadrunner is clever enough to find water even in the desert cactus."

"The list of spirits we recognize and love is long," Ellen added. "I can't name them all, of course, but I will mention a few more you should know. Hummingbird is tiny, but valiant despite her size. She defends her territory as fiercely as any large mammal. Dragonfly shows us which paths to follow and is highly honored by the Scouts as a totem that aids messengers. Uktena who live much further south have told me about Parrot, who is a friend of both sun and rain. And the numbers of ancestor spirits we have is uncountable."

"At some of our most special moots, the strongest Medicine Workers among us welcome certain of the ancestor spirits to tell stories through their living bodies," Josh interjected. "It's almost indescribable to watch! Sometimes a female spirit speaks in a male body, and vice versa."

"It's a rare occurrence," agreed Ellen, "though a joyous one. In this way, some of us have been able to discover legends that have long been lost. Alas, the times when these spirits come among us have grown few, and I can't understand why."

Her brow furrowed for a bit, then she gave the Half Moon a hopeful smile. "But tell me about Turkey, Erishka. You seem to have some sort of special bond with him."

Erishka related the story of finding the talen in the museum, and after a brief hesitation, added the part about the troubling dreams she'd had after her First Change. "So, I'm not sure why I got the task, but I think I did right by freeing the spirit," she finished. "Here, look at the beard feather fetish." She pulled it out of her bag and handed it to the Theurge. "One of the Glass Hand folks bound the spirit for me, in honor of my visit. It's kind of a lie detector. They said it was a good thing for a Half-Moon to have."

Ellen rubbed her hand over the feathers reverently. "This is beautiful. There's more power here than just the spirit within, though. Keep it close to you, for I suspect it'll one day be needed."

"How will I figure out when that'll be?" asked Erishka.

"If you are a true daughter of Uktena, you will know," Ellen responded. Josh and Natesa nodded in agreement. Their musings were interrupted then by a knock on the door, and Josh's younger sister brought in a tray of hot food.

Great Uktena

Apart from expressing their appreciation for the meal, nothing was said for several minutes until the gnawing in their stomachs was stilled. After a while, Ellen smiled. "I sense another question is waiting for your mouth to quit chewing."

Erishka nodded and swallowed. "What about our tribal totem?" she asked. "I've heard how Older Brother won his favor, but I don't really know more that that. Er, if now is not the wrong time to speak of it," she added hastily, for the sound of chewing ceased throughout the room.

"No," replied the Crescent Moon slowly, "I do not think it is a bad time. Not at all." She looked at Josh and Natesa, and added, "Since you asked." Ignoring Erishka's puzzled look she began.

"Great Uktena appears as a giant water serpent, big around as an ancient tree, with spots (some say bands) of color running around and down his body. He has antlers like a great deer, and on his forehead lies a great gemstone, called the *ulun'suti*, that shines like a diamond or a ruby. Most say he is red, but some say white or blue or maybe some other color."

"Many say he has wings when he needs them," said Josh.

"Some people say Great Uktena has a head — and maybe even legs — like a mountain lion, and that he has straight horns and not antlers," added the No Moon.

"I don't know about that," Ellen said with a slight shrug. "Could be that Uktena was playing a trick on one of us."

Erishka piped up. "The folks in Florida told me the Water-Cougar was a servant of Uktena. Maybe that's where the confusion comes from."

Ellen nodded gravely at this. "However he looks, Great Uktena is an angry spirit, though he does not see fit to tell us why. Some say it is because of an ancient treachery. An elder told me that in the time before the People, Uktena served the Wyrm of

Galunlati

Galunlati, the home realm of Great Uktena, is most accessible through the tribal spirit realm; however, few dare travel there. It is perhaps more beautiful and more majestic than the Uktena tribal realm, but far more dangerous. Peaks are higher and more jagged, forests are dark and trackless, rivers run quick over rocks and hidden snags, storms fiercer than mere tornadoes tear at the land and shatter tree and rock with brilliant bolts of lightning. The land takes no pity on visitors. More notable than the realm itself is its inhabitants, for Galunlati is the land of monsters. Giants and stoneskins, uktena and water cougars, creatures long forgotten or too terrible to ever live on earth call Galunlati home.

Some say the first werewolves drove the monsters of the Pure Lands there, or perhaps the Great Mother banished them from the earth. Others say Galunlati was the birthplace of all these creatures, and their final retreat until they are loosed upon the world at the end of days. But whether Galunlati is refuge or prison, the fact remains that only the strongest, cleverest, and bravest Uktena can long survive there. Perhaps that is why so many who challenge for elder status are sent to Galunlati for their test. Great Uktena seldom leaves his realm anymore, so any who wish to treat with him for Gifts or lore must first brave a journey which itself would be worth an epic.

Balance. He was a hunter of all the worlds, searching for the ways to unravel that which the Weaver had too tightly bound, things which otherwise could not die in their turn. But when the Weaver bound the Wyrm, Uktena the Secretbreaker could not himself break the threads. He did not follow his master into corruption and madness, but joined Gaia instead, where he remained a seeker of secrets. Yet his failure burns within from that day to this. So the elder said, 'If Great Uktena has spoken of it, the tale was not carried to my ears.'

"But anger swirls like bitter poison in his body. Venom drips from his mouth, poison is in his breath and spirit-flame is in his gaze. With his venom, strength and scales stronger than stone he would make a fine totem of war, but Uktena is not so direct. He prefers guile and cleverness, learning by watching from concealment, and the stealthy deadly strike. He knows more than we, but expects us to use his gifts to discover more than ambush.

"None but the most cunning seekers may see the great water serpent. Instead they may see the fog whirl with his passing, or hear the scrape of scales on a canyon wall. But some he lures to him by calling to them in the voices of their loved ones. And in the old days, they would come, and he would dazzle them in the blinding light of the *ulun'suti*, the gem that shines from his skull, and then they would run into his open mouth." Ellen moved her hands to describe the light, the mouth and the poor victim trotting to his doom.

"Even if he does not eat you, to meet him is doom. For Great Uktena's gaze to fall on you is death to those you hold

dear. This is the way of Uktena, for he likes his secrets and does not wish to be spied on. But because our tribe honors him, as no one else would dare, he lifted this death curse. However, only the greatest, the wisest of our people may look upon him, for the unworthy risk ill fortune for the presumption.

"To those packs worthy of his special patronage, he sends his lesser children, who are also difficult to see yet make their presence known with sign or sound. Their gaze is not so dangerous, but one should still show them great respect."

"Those who wish Uktena's favor would do well to consecrate a place to do him homage. By a deep river pool or lake is best. Regular sacrifices are expected. Game taken by ambush or trap is good, as is some other valuable discovered or acquired through cunning; but what Uktena really likes is secrets, whether written and dropped into the pool or whispered across the water. Of course, to find Great Uktena himself, one can always travel to his home realm of Galunlati, but few survive such a journey." She sighed. "And that is gracious plenty about our totem."

The Triat

"How does Great Uktena deal with other spirits? Like the Weaver, Wyrm and Wyld?" asked Erishka, after a lengthy pause.

"The relationships between Great Uktena and the Grandfather and Grandmother spirits of Smoke, Serpent and Spider are complex," Ellen said, after she'd eaten another heaping portion of lamb stew. "Don't be surprised if when you meet the Wyrmcomer Changers or even a few members of Little Brother's tribe, they look at you with suspicion in their eyes. They contend that Uktena is too much like Grandfather Serpent. Well, maybe that's so, but remember, until the three Grandfathers fell out of balance, the Wyrm wasn't 'evil.' It was a force, no better and no worse, than the Wyld or the Weaver. Don't forget that Uktena is a totem of Wisdom. It was wise enough to see that any service to Grandfather Serpent had become a foolish and dangerous proposition.

"As a tribe, we have walked with both Grandmother Smoke and Grandfather Spider. The Wyld gives us strength and anger, and it dwells close to the heart of our too-rare wolf Kinfolk. We should be careful not to call too often on these primal forces, lest they destroy us as well as our enemies. The Weaver teaches us about order and the patterning of life, and it is the major force at work in the lives of our human Kin. Then again, too much order and regulation strangles our freedom. But, to put it simply, we oppose Grandfather Serpent any way we can. Some consider opposing him to be merely combat of arms; we Uktena know that conquering the Wyrm and restoring the balance will come through cunning, not mere brute force."

The Litany

"Tell me something else, then," said Erishka. "I'm a Lawgiver, so it's my job to interpret the Litany among my pack and sept. But it seems so... brief. Sure, there's a lot to guide me, but these rules seem open to quite a lot of individual interpretation."

Garou Shall Not Mate With Garou

To her surprise, it wasn't the Crescent Moon who spoke, but the Trickster, who for the most part had been quiet during the meal. "If you've noticed that, then you've learned something already. My packmates and I have an understanding," said Natesa, with a slight inclination of her head. "They can't help but recoil a bit at the fact I'm a metis...."

"You're selling us short!" Josh snarled. "We never...."

"Did I say you had treated me wrongly? No! You must let me finish," snapped Natesa. "What I was *going* to say was that even though your gut reaction is to flinch, you and Ellen have welcomed me as a pack member and judged me for my deeds, not my parentage. The general Uktena view on metis is that the parents have done wrong and must face punishment, but their child is not guilty."

"But not necessarily innocent, either," said Erishka, slowly.

The No Moon rewarded her with a bitter smile. "Ah, see, you already know both the letter and the spirit of the law. I'm more fortunate than some Uktena metis, who face unspoken scorn and mistrust all their days. If you want an opinion, our lot in this tribe is better than many, but still, life is harder than that of a homid or lupus."

Combat the Wyrm Wherever It Dwells and Whenever It Breeds

"I can speak about fighting the Wyrm," Josh said. "You saw tonight that we take the battle against Grandfather Serpent most seriously. Even if those Spirals hadn't been nosing around the caern, we'd still have killed them as quickly as possible. That is our way, plain and simple."

"Well, I don't mean to contradict you, pack leader, but there's a bit more to it than that," Natesa piped up.

"Yes, we slay things that belong to the Wyrm, but we also make a point of learning as much as we can about them before moving in for the kill. Let's take that book your wife's young shaman friend toted around for a while."

Josh's mouth dropped open. "Now, wait a minute. That's different. He...." The Trickster cut him off.

"Nope, not a bit different. And before you tell me to hush up, remember that Erishka here has earned the right to hear a secret or two. Okay, to make a long story short, this shaman friend of Rosie's brought this old book here for Ellen to see. It was called *The Diaries of Zeerne*, and it had the scent of Grandfather Serpent all over it. I guess other folks would have tossed it into a fire, but some of us read it, silently, of course. Dark stuff about the Spirals and this old group of Wyrmbringers called the Society of the Weeping Moon. I did some checking, and I think they're long gone. But *if* a few are still poking around, by reading that book, I learned something about how to fight them, how to defeat them. To know the enemy is to know their weaknesses. So don't

discount getting information from agents of the Wyrm before you destroy them."

Respect the Territory of Another

"I'm not sure I can give a fair view on the issue of respecting territory," said Josh, changing the subject. "We Uktena do it, but the Wyrmcomers and Wyrmbringers obviously didn't. So should we ignore it, since they did, or honor it more strongly to show them a better example?"

"I think the tribe is split on that," Ellen replied. "You'll find, ah, extremists who think we should have a big uprising, open up casinos everywhere and take the *belagaana* for every cent we can. And then there are others who say now is now, not a century past. It was the will of Gaia that we should lose our lands, for whatever reason, and we must do the best with what we have left. I think I personally err on the side of living by example. If we take the lands of others, we're no better than those who stole what was ours. And I believe this is doubly true when talking about our Changer brothers and sisters, werewolves and Fera alike."

"You're awfully optimistic," Natesa grumbled, but she said nothing else after the Crescent Moon gave her a hard stare.

Accept an Honorable Surrender

Josh took up the thread of the conversation again. "Getting to the rules of war, we show honor in ourselves by accepting honorable submission from others. To scorn what is nobly given shows we aren't worthy. Still, most Uktena demand amends, and this isn't unique to American Indian culture. Even some of the Wyrmbringers have legends of taking an 'eye for an eye.' And what reparation do most Uktena want in return for accepting surrender?"

"Secrets," Erishka answered. "That's a no-brainer."

"Right... most of the time, anyway. Knowing a secret about an adversary grants you power. The type of secret, of course, should fit the situation. In a fair fight, don't ask for more than is deserved. But if the opponent has acted dishonorably, you have every right to demand something more dear."

"Still," said Natesa, "don't forget that we have no problem with an opponent being clever or wily. After all, that's something Uktena treasures in his own tribe, and if another imitates this trait, then in a way, it's an honor to our totem as well."

Submit to Those of Higher Stations

Josh gnashed his teeth. "Though it galls me sometimes, as a pack leader and *adren*, I believe strongly in submitting to those of higher station. Not because I'm too proud, but because I think this law applies to both the Pure Ones and those of Wyrmcomer tribes. Again, it's the whole thing of doing what's proper. Gaia gave us an understanding of who is alpha, and the respect that should be accorded to those of rank. To defy this is to scorn Her path, and that's not something any of us should do, even if we detest the ones to whom we show deference."

"I'd like to point out that those of higher station should be worthy of the submission we give them," Natesa added. "Most of the time, they are, but not always." Ellen nodded in agreement.

The First Share of the Kill for the Greatest in Station

"The submission to those who are greater is also reflected in granting the first share of the kill," the Theurge said. "But this is where we can see their wisdom most clearly displayed. Are those we honor judicious in how much meat they take? Do they see where the need is greatest and give to those who are weak and hungry, so the pack thrives? To put it bluntly, a good leader is not much fatter than his sept. Yes, he may eat first, but he should not devour all that is available, lest the elders who are tired and the young who are slow starve because of greed. It's a good rule by which to judge the quality of those who lead, young Lawgiver."

Ye Shall Not Eat the Flesh of Humans

"Speaking of food, I guess we don't need to tell you not to go around eating humans," Natesa said, with a raised eyebrow. Ellen shuddered.

"No, we should never do this. It reminds me too much of Younger Brother's totem, Wendigo. Maybe it happened long ago, but times and ways change."

"But it *did* happen?" asked Erishka. "What, you mean like the Aztecs and others in Mesoamerica? I remember reading about blood sacrifices and dark death rituals, but I'm not sure about the whole flesh-eating part."

"Yes, I'm afraid it's true," answered Natesa. "Now, before you recoil in horror, don't judge them with your modern sensibilities. The Aztecs, among others, were a society of warriors. Some people think the sacrifices and preoccupation with death were a means of keeping order and controlling the population. Others maintain that drinking blood was a way to consume protein. But a bit of Uktena legend has it that by eating flesh, one could capture the memories of the dead in dreams. Pretty potent medicine, if you ask me."

Erishka thought it over a moment. "Hmm. I wonder if there are some of us who still partake of this practice. And don't dare tell anyone?"

Natesa's white eye seemed to glimmer. "Well, they sure as hell aren't saying anything about it if they do."

Respect Those Beneath You — All Are of Gaia

Josh coughed. "As far as respecting those who are beneath you, this is just the flip side of giving respect to elders. Because you're a Lawgiver, you'll probably be a pack leader, or maybe even a sept leader someday, Erishka. When that happens, don't forget to listen to your less-experienced brothers and sisters. You're the one who ultimately has to make decisions for the good of everyone, but you'd be surprised how much those of lesser rank can contribute."

"Respect isn't just something for werewolves, either," Natesa added. "You should also value animals and spirits who may be lesser beings. That goes for times that you kill prey or ask for guidance."

"Respect for Kin goes a long way, too," said Ellen. "We cannot accomplish nearly as much in the world of humans without their input, and only foolish Changers, like some of the Wyrmcomers, devalue their Kin."

The Veil Shall Not Be Lifted

"Still," the Crescent Moon continued, "I disapprove of telling Kin too much. The Veil exists for a reason, and this is doubly true for humans. Even those of the Pure Ones who have the capacity to believe and understand many things shouldn't be overly burdened by our troubles. Keeping the Veil intact is one of the many great secrets we hold."

"I'm not so sure about that," the Ahroun said slowly. "I think there are a bunch of wise and worthy humans among the People that would gladly join our fight, if they could."

Natesa's voice dropped to a whisper. "That reminds me of something I've kept for the right time to tell. The Children of Gaia have a ritual to do this. They can lift the Veil and bring in humans as if they were Kin."

"What?" yelped Ellen. "You mean they turn humans into Kin?"

The Trickster shrugged. "I'm not positive if that's how it works, but at the least, the chosen ones can stand to see us in our war form. It would make mating a lot easier, though, wouldn't it?"

Ellen bit her lip. "It is both a blessing and a curse. If they used this ritual wisely, then it could be a wonder for all werewolves. But if they performed it without forethought, I can imagine few harsher curses. Perhaps we should investigate further?" she asked Josh.

The big Warrior nodded. "Absolutely. As soon as we can."

Erishka started to ask where in the world the No Moon had learned this information then decided she didn't want to know that badly.

Do Not Suffer Thy People to Tend Thy Sickness

Ellen turned the conversation away from the Veil as quickly as she could. "Elders among both Changers and Kin have great value and honor among us, yet there comes a time in everyone's life when they can no longer contribute. At this time, the elder usually undertakes a final quest or battle inspired by visions and dreams, knowing he will not return. We respect him for knowing that it weakens the tribe to have to tend those who are sick and frail."

"Well, it's sort of a mixed blessing," muttered Natesa. "I mean, those who are eldest know more than most of us younger ones put together. And yet, they're expected to go off and die alone. That seems kind of cruel."

"You misunderstand," the Theurge contradicted. "Most times, it's only when the burden of their sickness outweighs the wisdom they give that the elders leave us. As long as they can offer something, yes, they stay. But it's much better for them to go when their minds and bodies are so infirm, they cannot share their knowledge and experience. Even some humans realize that it's better to die than endure a tortured life."

The Leader May Be Challenged at Any Time During Peace, the Leader May Not Be Challenged During Wartime

"As the pack's No Moon, it's my part to keep Josh here on his toes," grinned Natesa. "But there's a right time and a wrong time to do this, just like the way we tell our stories. It's plain stupid to harass a leader or challenge him in the midst of war. He or she needs all the energy and wisdom possible then, and the pack's job is to support him, usually without question. But in peace, some leaders have a tendency to get lax... though I've never known Josh to do that," she added quickly. "Still, in the quiet times, giving challenge makes a leader better. If they are victorious, they know they're in their rightful place and can gain confidence. If they lose, well, that's sort of the 'law of the jungle,' if you will. The strongest and most clever werewolf needs to lead, that's simple enough. Challenging is merely the best way to assure that our alphas are the best they can be."

"I think those army people need you to write their ads," Josh snorted. "But yes, I agree with you. If I'm not worthy to lead, and I'm too stupid to see it, then it's my packmates' duty to make things clear."

Ye Shall Take No Action That Causes a Caern to be Violated

"The Litany is quite specific about protecting caerns," explained Ellen. "And we take the words seriously. Even though we are collectors of secrets, by no action *or* inaction do we ever cause the violation of a caern."

"You're probably wondering why we're a little edgy about this law," Natesa chimed in. "It's because so many of *our* caerns were taken or violated by the Wyrmcomers. So we're more protective than ever of them today."

"What you say is true, Natesa, but you've left a bit of something out," muttered Josh. "The thing is, many of our caerns are built right on top of, well, places that shouldn't be broken."

"I don't understand. What's under the caerns?" their guest asked.

Ellen gave a long sigh. "Since our pack leader brought it up, I will speak of it. Long ago, we Uktena took on the task of capturing and imprisoning powerful spirits. Some were of Grandfather Serpent, others of Grandmother Smoke and Grandfather Spider. A few of the most terrible ones were even bred from two of the Grandfathers. Our ancestors gained much accord from capturing and binding these awful

creatures deep into the bowels of the earth. What better place to hide them than under our caerns? These were sacred places always under watch and guard, where protectors would give their lives before surrendering the caern's secrets. All went well until the arrival of the Wyrmcomers. When we lost our caerns, we dared not tell the thieves just what they had stolen. Was this wise? I can't say. So the end of the tale is that more than a few caerns that were once Uktena now belong to the others, who are without a clue. They have no idea what lurks beneath. And if we were to tell them...."

"Then they'd think the worse of us," finished Erishka, remembering what Wind-in-the-Spruce had said. "We'd be named servants of the Wyrm or Gaia knows what."

"Yes. That is what I fear." The Theurge's eyes were bright with concern.

Seek Knowledge Wherever You May

"Which sort of rounds off this conversation," Josh said, stifling a tired yawn. "The heart of being Uktena is the collection of knowledge. This is something all of us do, no matter what moon we serve. But *you*," he pointed at the Philodox, "have a heavy burden in this. Our Lawgivers are in large part responsible for deciding how to use what we've collected and learned. And with the help of our Medicine Folk and all the others, it's your responsibility to lead the tribe and decide where we should keep looking for new knowledge. As a Warrior and a pack leader I know sometimes it's hard to make those decisions. Shoot, I love life just as much as the next guy and I don't want to throw away my last breath for no good reason. But a leader often has to make those judgment calls, to go into Grandfather Serpent's den knowing not everyone in the pack will come out alive, if the stories hidden there are worth something to our tribe as a whole." Ellen gave him a wan smile, and Natesa nodded approvingly.

"That's why he's pack leader," the metis joked. "He's no Songkeeper, but he has a real way with words sometimes." The door burst open then, accompanied by a loud exclamation of distress.

"Didn't I clearly tell you bunch to get some rest?" fussed Rosie. "Now shush up and sleep! Geez!"

Even Josh had the good manners to look a bit sheepish, and Erishka smothered a grin as she covered up with a thick wool blanket and caught some shuteye.

Breeds

Erishka didn't like the boat, not one damn bit. They'd gotten cut-rate passage on a freighter bound for Honolulu, in exchange for doing some cooking and cleaning. One of the sailors, friendlier than the others, told her that a lot of "college kids" did that to explore the world on the cheap side. Jolon seemed unusually content; he liked to watch for dolphins and whales while sitting on the prow. The only thing keeping up his companion's spirits was her desire to see the islands and meet the Garou there. Erishka had had no idea that werewolves would live on Hawai'i, but apparently they'd been there for some time.

Erishka's Notebook:

I miss the desert. I loved being part of the pack, even for just a few days, and it makes me even more eager to finish all this traveling and get home to find a pack of my own to join. I feel my place is with my people, not escorting Jolon around to do whatever business it is he's got to finish. Now we're on some damn boat, down in steerage, and if it wasn't for some herbs Rosie gave me, I guess I'd be upchucking about now. I am looking forward to seeing the islands, but that's about the only thing going well now. Jolon keeps to himself more than ever, and he didn't say much about his visit with the Arizona Kinfolk, just gave me a sly smile when I asked him if they got along. I kind of think they didn't, because a few of them looked sort of fearful when we left. Or maybe I read them wrong?

Kakai introduced herself as a No Moon to both Erishka and Jolon when they arrived on Kauai. The rest of her pack had been polite, welcoming them with the traditional human greeting of *aloha*, but clearly, it was the Ragabash who'd been given the duty of caring for the two guests. So she showed them to a grass hut in the shadow of thick palm trees and laid out some pupu snacks for them. Erishka couldn't help staring at Kakai; she was possibly the most stunning creature the younger werewolf had ever seen. Her body was lean and strong, tanned from the sun, and long black hair woven with bright flowers flowed down her back. The No Moon wore a green gown she called a muumuu, along with delicate necklaces strung with beads and flowers. As they entered the hut, she placed similar leis over their heads in a gesture of welcome. Erishka noticed that the Kinfolk's lei had different shells than her own, though they were still quite pretty, glittering in rainbow colors.

"Have you ever been to Hawai'i?" Kakai asked.

"Many years ago," replied Jolon, as Erishka shook her head no, "and it is even more beautiful than I remember. Your people seem to have a great deal of harmony here."

"We probably have some different customs than do the mainland Uktena, but like many of you, we live as a family. The old word was *ohana*, and some of us call our sept by this name today. I've been a Scout for most of my life, and I've traveled to a number of sacred places around the world, including the mainland."

"Really?" asked Erishka, fingering the tiny shells of her lei. "Did you like it there?"

"It was colder than I'm used to," Kakai smiled, "but yes, I saw many things that impressed me. And yet, the land spoke of sadness, too. Like these islands, it's become oppressed by outsiders who have no harmony within them."

Lupus

"One of my happiest moments was meeting those of Uktena's family who were born as wolves. Obviously, we don't have many lupus on Hawai'i, and for a few seasons, I

ran with those on four legs near the Great River. It's a memory I treasure, but a bittersweet one, too. Their numbers have diminished sharply over the years, no thanks to the *haole* settlers and farmers. And perhaps the worst of the lot were the werewolves from Europe, who stole the native-born wolf Kin for their own, forever diminishing the lupus Uktena." The Trickster's voice dripped bitter scorn. "The humans can claim ignorance, but not so the Wyrmcomers. Their actions were deliberate and cruel to us. The concept of *ohana* urges *kala*, forgiveness, but it's difficult for me to truly excuse what was done to the lupus and their Kin in the name of colonization."

Homid

"Did you grow up on a reservation?" she asked Erishka.

"Well, not exactly," responded the girl. "My mother was Uktena, a Choctaw, but I don't remember her. I stayed with my father who lived in town. My grandmother brought me to the reservation when I Changed."

"Ah. Then your werewolf blood was a surprise to you."

"Yeah, you could say that," Erishka muttered. "I'm getting used to it, though."

The No Moon idly drew in the sand floor as she talked, a pattern of squiggles on waves. "I've been to some of those reservations; life there is hard. But for one destined to become a werewolf, there are a few advantages. First, they're better thinkers. What I mean is that they're more willing to accept ideas that are between two worlds, that of flesh and of spirit. Not everything has to be concrete, as it is for the *haole*. The reservation life does offer them and their human cousins one other thing, and that's the shared experience of being an outsider, a stranger in their own land. Many native Hawai'ians are beginning to understand that as well."

"But this seems like a place with lots of different cultures," the Philodox mused. "I mean, I see people here in the islands who are Chinese, Japanese, Korean, you name it."

"Oh, yes!" said Kakai. "We've welcomed them over the centuries, for various reasons. But most came in peace. Not all, of course, but I daresay they didn't have the intention of turning the islands into a source of cheap profits. Anyway, that's something else about the Uktena. Over the years, we've taken a lot of different ethnic groups as Kin — for good reason. We'd have probably died out if we were as picky as, say, the Wendigo."

Metis

Jolon spoke then, and both the women jumped, almost as if they'd forgotten he was there. "And what does the Uktena law say about the metis?" he asked. "Just curious. I figured as Kin, I ought to know something about mating habits."

Erishka sensed that Kakai was a bit flustered, but the Ragabash recovered quickly. "I have heard in my travels that metis are becoming more common among us, despite the strong taboos against like mating with like. Some of the shamans say it's a sign of the End Times. What I know for sure is that unlike some tribes, we give the metis a chance rather than murdering them at birth. I mean, think about it! Wouldn't it be rather stupid to kill off werewolves just because they were born of two Garou? The Great Mother needs all the help She can get. What's more," Kakai continued, "the Wyld Children think that metis may have the blessings of Grandmother Smoke. I have no idea, but it's an interesting thought. Considering the tangled paths of the three Grandfathers, it does make a certain amount of sense."

Jolon nodded politely. "Thank you, that was most informative." Kakai nodded back, stared at him a moment, then looked away.

"One other thing I should mention, and that is the story of the so-called perfect metis," said Kakai in a quiet tone. "Many tales have been passed along that near the time we first saw Anthelios, a metis cub with no deformities was born to two metis." She shook her head. "Strange times we live in. Some Garou think this is yet another sign of the Apocalypse. Others say the young perfect metis is a sign of hope. There's no way to know, of course, until time passes and events run the course they must."

Moon Faces

By this time, the sun had set in the west, sending a warm scarlet glow tinged with purple and amber across the water near the hut. Erishka noticed that a narrow stream flowed into the ocean, and she delighted in trotting over on four legs to take a long drink from the water. It was cool, but not cold, yet it was some of the sweetest liquid she'd ever tasted. After a moment, her ears picked up the soft sound of bare feet on sand, and Kakai sat down beside her.

"Your Kinfolk is an interesting fellow," the No Moon said. "Where did you find him?"

Erishka stretched until her form matched that of the Trickster. "Oh, he's someone my grandmother asked me to take around so he could deliver some messages and packages to various folks. You know, the kind of stuff that you can't drop in the post."

"Is that so? Well, it's a singular privilege for you too, then." Kakai dug her feet in the warmth of the earth.

"I did a bit of that sort of thing when I was a *cliath*, too."

"Oh?" asked Erishka, curious. "Is that part of being a No Moon?"

Ragabash

"Yes and no. I'm sure others might deny it, but we Tricksters are among the most clever of the Uktena. We learn to live by our wits and how to turn language to our own ends. Language is a living thing, you know, constantly changing. It used to be that the Uktena spoke only in the tongues of the Pure Ones, but with new Kin in our midst, we've added a host of fresh words and expressions to the way

we speak every day." She laughed. "It's a No Moon's paradise. For an auspice who loves double talk, mind games and clever tricks to find out what people know, these new tongues are a gift from Luna."

"I thought you Ragabash were questioners who provoked the pack leaders and such," Erishka said, thinking of Natesa and Josh.

"That's part of our job, too, and so is the collection and keeping of secrets," explained Kakai. "But the bigger picture is that the Tricksters do anything to make renewal part of our lives. Think of totems like Tadpole and Caterpillar. Change is a powerful concept, and we're here to make sure that while traditions are kept, life never becomes stale and withered."

Theurge

"So when you question the Warriors, what do... " the Half Moon began, but Kakai cut her off.

"Question the Warriors? What do you mean?"

"Well, you just said that you provoke the pack leaders, and they're all Warriors," replied Erishka.

The Ragabash laughed, a sound of waves lapping on the shore. "Who told you the Ali'i were always the pack leaders? Maybe that's true in some of the Wyrmcomer tribes, but not the Uktena. In fact, it's our Crescent Moons who are the *real* alphas among us. They may not say so, but behind every strong Full Moon is a wise Shaman manipulating events. They're the ones who know the genuine truths behind the secrets that others collect. They share what's needed and keep the rest to themselves. It's a heavy burden being a Crescent Moon of the Uktena, make no mistake. If they speak too much, they send others to their doom. If they don't say enough, then who knows what could be lost. Fortunately, they have your kind, the Half Moons, to help them."

Philodox

"The Lawgivers are our best mentors and teachers. Not only do they interpret the Litany and decide on punishments for crimes, they excel at building connections between us. Look at what you've been doing, Erishka. You've talked with many different kinds of Uktena, and each place you go you create a link with a new pack or sept. We Uktena have long memories, and in the days to come, we won't forget that you shared a story with us. Since we're so spread out in these times, such bonds are worth much," said Kakai, with a smile.

"But back to your relationship with the Crescent Moons. The burden they have, as I said, is heavy. Many times they'll share it with a Half Moon. As a judge, you can aid them in deciding which secrets should be spoken, and how gathered knowledge should influence the pack's actions. A burden shared is somewhat less heavy for both who carry it."

"Then a Half Moon is also a good listener," Erishka mused. "I can live with that. So, what about the Songkeepers and Warriors, since we're talking about Luna's faces?"

Galliard

Kakai rolled onto her stomach, propping her chin in her hands. "I take it you've spent some time at powwows, or whatever it is the mainland Kin call the native gatherings." Erishka nodded. "Then you already know that stories aren't told idly. They've got a right time to be heard, and a right person to tell them. The Galliards can sense when a story is ready to be heard, and if the occasion is right for speaking it. I'm not sure if fable or allegory is the word I'm looking for, but all their stories have a *reason* for being told. Maybe it's to teach a lesson, or pass on a secret. Perhaps it's to cheer hearts that are sad and lonely. But a Songkeeper never speaks without a purpose. Most of the ones I've met understand that words are both special and powerful. To let them loose with no care is foolish. So you should mind anything and everything they say because there's always intent behind their talk."

Ahroun

"And last are the Full Moons, the Warriors, or as we call them, the Ali'i." Kakai fell silent a long moment. "This is a hard one," she muttered. "I guess I can describe them as fearless, like most Warriors. But the Uktena Ahroun are more than that. They're cold, calculating and ruthless. Oh, it may not show on the surface. And perhaps more than most other tribes' Warriors, ours have a closer connection to the spirit world. Some almost talk like Crescent Moons!" she said with mirth. Erishka thought of Josh, who seemed so calm and focused for a Full Moon, and didn't say anything.

"But it's a ruse," the Hawai'ian continued. "I can't imagine many things more dangerous than an Uktena Ahroun who has had time to plan an assault against an enemy. They're deadly in the details and perhaps some strange combination of the Weaver and the Wyld guides their hands."

Erishka's Notebook:

Heck, we'd hardly arrived in Kauai before we had to leave. I finally asked Jolon just exactly what it was he was telling folks or delivering or whatever, and at first he didn't answer. But I got a little peeved, and finally he said, "I have messages from other people and places, and our travels are at the whim of the waters." What does that mean?! After all her questions, I thought Kakai might sort of be interested in getting to know Jolon better, even if he was born on the mainland. But I don't think anything physical happened between them. Still, he must have said something to her, because I could've sworn she had tears in her eyes when we said goodbye.

Dwellings of the Earth and Heavens

The land itself seemed hot and sweaty. Unlike Kauai, the border sept near the Great River didn't have a cool breeze and sweet waters. Erishka didn't expect creature comforts, but she found herself more homesick than ever. When they'd arrived, in the back of a fruit truck, a few kids had come out to meet

them, laughing and singing. They'd been led to a block and mortar house, and there a middle-aged woman with graying hair and a worn face had been shaping clay into pots. Jolon sat in the corner, quietly while Erishka watched. The woman never said anything to her, so finally, tired of the silence, the girl asked what she was doing.

"*¿Por qué debo decirle lo que quiere saber?*" their host answered, without looking up from her work. Erishka didn't know what to say; she recognized that the language was probably Spanish, but she had no clue what it meant.

"I don't understand," the Half Moon replied. "I don't speak your language."

"*¿No comprende? Creo que quiere decir que no sabe. Comprender es algo bien distinto que saber. Se puede tener el uno sin el otro, pero sólo al combinar los dos es posible lograr la perspicacia de verdad.*"

Erishka felt her fists clenching. "Come on, dammit, we're both Garou. Tell me what you mean!"

The woman gave her a hard look, then pushed a pile of clay towards her. "I thought you were a Lawgiver, like me. How do you expect to be a judge when you can't understand the stories people tell?" Rebuked, Erishka felt her cheeks flush.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be rude. I just... it's difficult to communicate when we speak in two different languages."

"Well, that's the best observation you've made since you arrived," the woman replied in a mocking tone with a deep Texas twang now that she spoke English. "I'm called Rocío Parts-the-Water. Who're you?"

"Um, I'm Erishka Derr. This is one of my Kin, Jolon." She motioned to her companion watching from the corner, who gave a nod to Rocío.

"Right," said the woman, with a hard stare at Jolon. "Well, you're both welcome anyhow. Didn't expect you, but that's okay. What can I help you with?"

"I think Jolon has some business here," Erishka answered. "I'm just the escort."

"Actually," said the Kinfolk, "I was supposed to bring you here and let Rocío tell you stories about the Uktena. You've heard many already, and maybe we should've come here first. But I'm sure she's got some tales you haven't heard."

"Grandmother's doing?" Erishka asked.

"Something like that," nodded her traveling companion.

"Hmmm," answered Rocío. "How much do you know about where the Uktena live? Have you met a bunch of us already?"

"Some," the girl admitted, "but I don't have a clear idea of the big picture, so to speak."

"Okay. Let's start in your home and mine. I'm no Moon Dancer, but I've traveled a fair bit in my time. Oh, and while I talk, *you* try your hand at pinching some pots," grinned the Half Moon. "My wrists can use a rest."

The United States

"I'm a border child, at home and a stranger in both the States and Mexico. But let's look at the U.S. first. Once, the Uktena roamed in a wide range, almost coast to coast. Their favorite settlements were in the desert Southwest and along the coasts of the Gulf. Some moved into the temperate Southeast after the death of Middle Brother. As Wyrmbringers and Wyrmcomers pushed us aside, our territories became split and scattered. Nowadays, odd as it may seem, Uktena are almost everywhere, though in small numbers. Our strongest caerns, though, remain in the Appalachians, the rural deep South, along the Mexican border and among some of the large reservations in the Southwest. We've let the Wendigo and Red Talons roam much of the Pacific Northwest and the Plains, though you'll find us mixing and mingling there often enough. And there're a couple of islands we fancy, too, including Hawai'i and the Sea Islands of the Georgia coast. Our Kin live in these places, so we do, too."

"We just came from Kauai," Erishka explained, as her hands tried to shape a squat pot. "Though Uktena may not be 'native' there, they've certainly formed strong bonds with the Kin they chose from there." Rocío gave her a nod of approval.

Mexico

"The homeland of my mothers, Mexico, has a long and detailed history, which I'll keep short," continued the Half Moon. "Suffice it to say, this land became a battleground, not only between werewolves of the Old World and the New, but also between the Garou and the Fera."

"Fera?" asked Erishka. "I've heard them mentioned a few times. Who are they, exactly?"

Rocío shrugged. "The other Changers. The ones specifically in Mexico were the Balam, the werejaguars. Beautiful creatures, but a bit feisty. Anyway, Uktena did have relations with many of the great civilizations of Mexico and Central America, such as the Toltecs, Mayans and Aztecs. We took some Kin from those peoples, but it all changed with the coming of Cortes and the Wyrmbringers. Thereafter, these lands were long subject to the whims of the Europeans, and even after they left, it's remained a troubled country full of greedy politicians and both witting and unwitting agents of the Weaver. There is much wonder and beauty here, and no telling what kinds of secret places and hidden artifacts. But we've got no toehold, really, and those Balam carry a long grudge from the War of Rage. Deserved, I reckon. What Uktena do live in Mexico tend to stay in the highlands, away from the cities."

Canada

"Way up north, in Canada, is out of our turf. That's the land of Little Brother, and we respect his territory. In the past, some of our Kin mingled with theirs, so you may occasionally find a rare Uktena born there among the Wendigo. But chances are, he'll grow up among Little Brother and his Kin, and we won't know anything about it."

South America

"The numbers of Uktena dwindle sharply as you go further south through Central America to South America," Rocío continued. "I've been there a few times, and as you might expect, it's a place of incredible beauty. But again, you've got lots of Fera there still angered by the War of Rage. Some Uktena, especially those with ties to the U'wa of Colombia, have joined what's been called the Amazon War, an all-out offensive against the forces of Wyrm and Weaver that've almost destroyed the rain forests. Nice place to make a name for yourself, if you ever get an urge to try out your claws."

From Erishka's Notebook:

Reading through some of my dad's books, I came across a reference to a Central American creature called the Onza by the Spanish, and cuitlamiztli (wolf cat) by the Aztecs. It supposedly looked like a puma with wolfish legs and longer, pointed ears, but it was more aggressive. The book suggested it was a remnant of a cheetah species that lived in the Americas back in the Pleistocene Era. Several were killed in the 1900's, but the specimens have been lost or stolen. I asked Tide-Borne if they might be a crossbreeding of Garou and some other Fera, but he said that was impossible, and he'd never heard anything about Mexican cheetahs anyway. I need to remember to ask some western Uktena about it when I get back over that way.

Africa

"Oh, how I'd love to go to Africa! Can you imagine seeing the ruins of cities like Great Zimbabwe? Much of Central, West and East Africa are the ancestral homelands of some of our Kin. Still, it's not a place where Uktena would be overly welcome. There are numerous Fera there, and it's also the traditional homeland of the Silent Striders. Our relations are quite good with that tribe, and now they've even established a strong peace accord in Africa called the Ahadi. But until they get all the kinks worked out, I'll hold back on my visit."

Asia

"Hmmm, let's see, what have we not covered...? Oh, I didn't mean to forget about Asia, especially not Siberia. It's part of Russia, true, but the Siberian Uktena are much more like us than those flighty Silver Fangs. We've got some *very* important caerns there, and for many years, the Uktena kept to themselves. But as of late, they've actually flirted with the idea of maybe mending their fences with the other Russian werewolves. And I guess I need to tell you a secret, since it's sort of a tradition for me to share one as part of my teaching. At least one of those mighty caerns cages an ancient Bane. Yep, it's buried deep beneath the caern's heart, and I imagine they keep the lid on real tight. Don't go blabbing that to anyone else, but you file it away for safekeeping."

Europe

Erishka finished shaping a rather sad-looking pot, but at least its sides were even. "Not bad," said Rocío, "especially for a first try. You'll do better on your next one," she

explained, tossing the pot back into the clay mound, and giving her pupil another slab to work with.

"I'm afraid I can't say too much about Europe. Never been there, 'cause it's Weaver Land if you ask me. Too many cities, too many trains and jam-packed with people. But I know other Uktena have gone there, and they've found a decent welcome for the most part. It's certainly a good place for a Moon Dancer to collect stories and lore. I guess you already know, that when we Uktena get curious about something, we're bound to pursue it wherever the trail leads. Maybe in the coming years, that'll be a reason for more of us to get over to Europe and see what kind of trouble we can find."

Australia

"So where do you travel next?" asked Rocío. "I get the sense you two've been on the road for a while now."

To Erishka's surprise, Jolon answered. "Yes, the journey has been long. I'm to take Erishka to Australia, then our travel is over."

"Well, in that case, let me talk a bit about what you might find," responded their host. "Australia is a sad place. I say that because it had so much wonder for the Uktena, at least at first. The native peoples, the aborigines, had a close relationship with the Australian werewolves called Bunyip. These werewolves also managed, by some lost rite, I suppose, to use the native marsupial 'wolves' known as thylacines as Kinfolk. They weren't wolves like we've got here, but hey, they were still Kin. I reckon you can guess what happened. Wyrmcomers and Wyrmbringers showed up. They harassed the human Kin of the Bunyip, murdered their wolf Kin and then started taking caerns. But it gets worse. Australia was the site of the War of Tears, where by trickery and deceit, we killed off the Bunyip. Yes, I *meant* to say we. I've heard tell the Uktena tried to stop the killing, but to no avail, so we're guilty, too." Rocío dropped her head to her chest, seeming to stifle a moan of pain.

"We've got at least one well-known sept there," she continued after a long pause. "It's called the Sept of the Waking Dream, and I know they've got representatives in the big council of all the werewolves in Australia. But I don't think much is getting accomplished. Maybe when you come back here, you can give me an update." Rocío pounded the clay a few minutes, then gave a quick nod to Erishka's latest pinchpot. Rather than throwing the clay back into her stash, she set the pot aside to be fired.

The Umbra

"You didn't ask me about it specifically, but I think there's one more place I should mention," Rocío said, doling out more clay. "That's the Spirit Lands, the Umbra. If you know about the Skywalkers, you've probably heard they have a lot of shindigs there. If you can find it, the Uktena homeland is a place of rare beauty, a microcosm of Earth itself, with a mixture of forests, rocky mountains, rolling hills and even desert. Water is predominant, in streams, rivers and lakes. And when the crescent moon rises, you'll find that a lot of Uktena seem drawn to the Umbra, as that's the time when the moon paths are at their trickiest. It's a good time to send a cub on a Rite of Passage or a challenge because they'll have to use their wits for sure to get back home. I heard tell that one of the Uktena questing packs had taken a special interest in the Croatan home realm, which is now a lonely stretch of chilly plains and fir forests. I don't think Middle Brother can ever return to us, but I think it's right to honor him by revering his homeland."

Erishka's Notebook:

I didn't like Rocío much at first; she seemed like a bad-tempered hick. But I grew to respect her, and I was sorry when we left the day after we arrived. During the night, she took me to see her aunt, a withered old woman who was Kin, I think. She pulled out four cards decorated with pictures and symbols, and told my fortune. First was Judgment, with a set of gray scales beneath tall orange cliffs. She told me that my entire journey, I had walked alone. Next was the Hermit, a dark-skinned man painted with glyphs of red and black, who the aunt said would show me a path to deep waters. Third was the Moon, bright in an indigo sky; she said this portended transformation and change from the water. And last was the Star, glittering above a sea of aqua green. This, said the aunt, meant that if I lived, I would be a wise keeper of secrets. She sounded hopeful, but I only gave my thanks, and said no more.

I'm so tired. I feel scattered and stretched, like I have no sense of place anymore. If Australia is our last stop, I'll be relieved. I get the sense Jolon is holding something back, like maybe we've got somewhere else to go, and he doesn't want to tell me. As we've traveled, I'd hoped we become friends, but he's gotten more and more withdrawn and preoccupied. This trip isn't what I expected.

Friends and Foes

Erishka sat beside Adoni and watched in silence as he poked his fire with a stick. The darkness of the Outback swallowed them up. It was so murky, she couldn't even see the high cliffs that surrounded the caern. Other werewolves circled at a respectful distance, occasionally breaking into a howl of song at the crescent moon. Some instinct told her that this was no ordinary Shaman, but a werewolf of great power and rank, perhaps more than anyone she'd met. Jolon treated him with the utmost respect, and the Shaman had responded in kind. The Half Moon couldn't be sure, but he looked a lot like the Hermit she'd seen on the tarot card in Mexico. It both unnerved and puzzled her. So she'd let her clothes fall to the ground and willingly allowed the Shaman to paint various symbols on her arms and legs. The paint looked like some kind of ochre, but the smell was intoxicating. Her head swam a bit as the fire smoked and crackled.

The sensation was sort of like stepping sideways, yet the familiar coolness of the transition didn't touch her skin. Instead, Erishka felt as if she were falling into open air, the same feeling one had when half asleep, then jerked awake. Adoni spoke, and she used his voice as an anchor to keep herself steady.

The Garou

"Daughter of the Rainbow, Child of Uktena, you have come to where past, present and future are one. Before you leave the land, you will live and die. Turkey's feathers set you on your journey, but he did not come within these lands where spirits are angry and haunted. This is a place of law, where your two souls can be as one. I have heard the tales of your travels, even if you have not spoken them aloud. Only a few stories remain to be told to you, and that is why I am here. As all things are connected, land, water, spirit and fire, it is my place to show you the ties that bind us to the others. The differences you will come to know, but for now, hear about the threads passing between and among us, the warriors of the Great Mother."

Black Furies

"The children of Pegasus were not all conquerors. Many came in friendship, particularly to our women and our young. They have a strong bond with Grandmother Smoke as well as the humans who are also of Gaia. The Furies must learn to guard against their anger, lest it devour them. They have never trusted us with their secrets, and we have not asked them for what they will not give. Most will be glad to have your counsel, if you offer it as a woman first and a Garou second."

Bone Gnawers

"While the Bone Gnawers have great skill at finding secrets, I fear they have become too closely allied with the Weaver. Where once their self-assurance was strong, they now cower in the cities and bargain away their honor. Their future is troubled, for how can they serve Rat, a totem of the Wyld, when their thoughts are of Grandfather Spider? A few still prefer the wilderness, and I believe these are the ones who will survive and thrive."

Children of Gaia

"The hearts of Unicorn's followers are good and noble, and most truly wish to understand our ways and make peace, as Gaia Herself would wish for all Her children. They are an accepting people who tried to avert many of the disasters that befell the Pure Ones, here and in your homeland. Still, innocence has a shadow all its own. Because they choose to see the best in others, they are easily tricked. More than one has fallen into darkness because of their unguarded minds."

Fianna

"Though many would disagree, in some ways the Fianna are a tarnished reflection of the Uktena themselves. Here are a people who love their Kin, stories, song and dance, as we do. They have great courage and love the time of legends, and thus we share common bonds. Yet most act before they think, if they think at all. The worst of them are greedy, short sighted and selfish. They were numerous among those who stole caerns and destroyed the Pure Ones' way of life. It is a pity we cannot teach Stag's folk to show a bit more discipline and restraint."

Get of Fenris

"They are among the deadliest and fiercest warriors I have ever seen. Even their songs glorify battle and the strength of arms. That is their fatal flaw; they do not appreciate patience and wisdom. Too often, their vision has

no depth. They view the world through a haze of blood and anger. Fenrir's brood has yet to learn that a whisper can deafen a room just as easily as a scream."

Glass Walkers

"Cockroach is a clever totem, and so too are his followers. Much like the Bone Gnawers, they have a keen understanding of the city and a strong bond with Grandfather Spider. He shares many secrets with them, and in turn they put these to good use in the battle against Grandfather Serpent. But the Walkers are out of balance and too full of pride. They used the Weaver's tools against us, and I hold them partially responsible for the corruption of the Pure Lands. They can be valuable allies, but I would be cautious about giving them your full trust."

Red Talons

"We Uktena hold the Talons to be special, for they are a waning link to Gaia and all that remain of our wolf brothers and Kin. Yet they suffer from the same weakness as Little Brother; they are too slow to adapt and change. As the End Times arrive, they may well be among the first to fall, if they cannot learn to amend their thinking. The Talons, like all werewolves, have two souls, and they must acknowledge that they are not only wolf, but human as well. We would consider it a great honor if we could teach them more about living in two worlds."

Shadow Lords

"These dark children of Grandfather Thunder have forked tongues. Their use of guile and trickery is masterful, worthy even of the Great Uktena's notice. Yes, although I shudder to admit it, there is an advantage in knowing a Shadow Lord, as they have an inborn skill with manipulating the truth. We can learn from this. On the other hand, we do not lie, and these werewolves are both devious and dishonest. They are greedy for power and wealth, and even as this world dies, that is all they will remember."

Silent Striders

"Long have we called Owl's sons and daughters our friends, and many Uktena honor their totem as well as our own. These werewolves have great knowledge of the waking world, and they were among the few who tried to keep peace between the invaders from Europe and the Pure Ones. Only one thing troubles me about the Striders, and that is the spirits that haunt their footsteps. This is some great secret they hold, and perhaps we would be prudent to discover it."

Silver Fangs

"Despite their extreme beauty and proud demeanor, they are among the worst of all the European werewolves. Sadly, their own blood has tainted Falcon's children. Arrogant and haughty, most refuse to admit that others have a heritage as ancient and noble as their own. We Uktena do not acknowledge their self-styled rule of all Gaia's children, but for many years now, we have swallowed our outrage in order to work with the Silver Fangs against greater enemies. Perhaps a time is coming soon when their governance will meet with a fair challenge."

Wendigo

"Wendigo is our Little Brother, whom we love and respect. Yet we fear for him as well. The Wendigo is not a totem that gives us ease — it is a creature too much like darker forces that bring only terror. Many Wendigo are slow to adapt and change their traditions. We need to help them remember the wisdom of the old ways while also living with the new ways of the world."

Outsiders and Enemies

Adoni held cold water to her lips, and Erishka took a long drink.

"What happened? I feel like I've been sitting here forever," she groaned, stretching her aching limbs.

"You have," responded the Theurge, quietly. "You have been here always and forever. So I thought you might like some water before we continue." The Half Moon shrugged in agreement.

"So, that's it for the tribes of the Garou Nation, right? Who else is left?"

He gave her a long, hard chuckle, white teeth flashing in the moonlight. "Listen on, daughter, and I will tell."

Leeches

"First I will speak of the vampires, the undead who are neither living nor lifeless. They are disgusting creatures that carry the stench of Grandfather Serpent and yet flock to the havens of the Weaver. They have no idea of their own purpose. You should kill them, quickly, before they can work their magic on you. However, if the opportunity comes and you are not alone, many of us Crescent Moons would like to know more about their sorcery and their habits. For instance, how do they think they came to be? A people's legends can tell you much about the people themselves. What sort of blood flows through their bodies to keep them in this circle of the worlds? Perhaps if we knew more about them, they would be easier for us to defeat."

Witches and Shamans

"Those we name witches and shamans are a diverse group, though the former we generally treat as enemies while greeting the latter with courtesy. Some of them are harmless, perhaps even willing to learn from us and our way of life. A rare few have even met with the Uktena and shared their homelands in friendship and respect, with both parties becoming stronger for the alliance. Others, though, are little more than pawns of Grandfather Spider, wanting to control and restrict and bind all in their path. A small number serve Grandfather Serpent and have been granted great power from him. If meeting one of these witches, you would be wise to either flee or strike quickly. Sometimes, it is difficult to

know the intentions of any human magicians, so be cautious in your dealings with these creatures."

Nunnehi

"Beautiful and fragile, the creatures of dreams are more rare these days. Even though I have spent my whole life studying the Dreamtime, as you call it, I cannot be sure whether or not they actually come from that place or somewhere else entirely. They have many names, and their legends appear in almost every culture on this planet. The Nunnehi love the Wyld, as many of us do, and some among them have close ties with the Changers, especially the Fianna. But they usually keep to themselves and their own devices. Beware of their cunning tricks. Most are harmless, but some can turn deadly in an instant."

Ghosts

"Some Uktena Kin have a great fear of the dead and the restless spirits that linger behind, not without cause, I might add. Some are malevolent and only intend to cause harm. These beings can cause disease and afflictions that are difficult to cure. If you can, quickly banish or bind these entities where they cannot hurt anyone. Yet also know that some restless spirits can offer us protection or wisdom. Proceed cautiously. Aid them if you can, but do not give your trust to them in any case."

Hunters

"Troubling rumors have reached me that certain mortals seek to kill werewolves for some unknown purpose. What they are doing and why remains a mystery we need to solve. Is this for some sorcerous rite? If you need a task for your pack, gathering information on this new threat would be a worthy one."

Lost Ones

"Perhaps the saddest tale I must speak is that of the ones who have been lost to us, through self-sacrifice, blind ambition or our own narrow vision. First I speak for Middle Brother, then the others," Adoni continued.

Croatan

"They gave their lives to banish the Eater-of-Souls, as you already know, I see. But what you may not know is that some Uktena have had visions and dreams that the Croatan *will* return before the Apocalypse. Some even say if the Croatan reappear, it is a sure sign that the Final Days have arrived. If this is true, our joy at seeing the return of our lost brothers and sisters would be painfully tempered by the knowledge that they arrived only in time to die again."

Bunyip

"My heart is full of sorrow at the loss of the Bunyip, and it is a burden and blame all Garou must share. Yet, troubling rumors have reached this sept of lost Bunyip spirits wandering the spirit lands, not in the distance, but close. I myself have felt their anger and wonder how we could aid these lost ones. Their totem, the Rainbow Serpent, a cousin of Uktena, has been saved. Might we not also revive the Bunyip? The first step would be renewing their bonds with Kinfolk. There is another troubling story as well. Recently, a Tasmanian thylacine skin was stolen from one of the museums in the capitol. Who would have wanted this. And why? My own sept members are trying to trace the thief, but as yet have had no luck."

Stargazers

"Once, the Stargazers were a vital part of the Garou Nation, but for their own reasons, they departed and returned to their ancestral lands in the east. A few still remain among our tribes, but we despair that the Stargazer's knowledge as a whole is more elusive than ever. One task we Uktena have taken on ourselves is the duty of watching Anthelios and puzzling out its purpose, a duty the Stargazers once performed."

"Anthelios," Erishka whispered. "The red star."

"Ah, you have heard of it. The Eye of the Wyrm as some call it. Even I have no clear idea of what it portends. All I can do is watch and wait for a sign, as do many of our tribe."

Black Spiral Dancers and Fomori

"The lost werewolves once called White Howlers fell to Grandfather Serpent long ago and now are the Black Spiral Dancers," the Shaman continued.

"Ugh! Yes, I know who they are," shuddered the Half Moon. "I fought them in the desert in Arizona. Disgusting!"

Adoni gave a sage nod. "They deserve a posthumous moment of pity, but yes, you did well to kill them as quickly as possible. Some Uktena who have the power and skill can take their weapons and fetishes and study them, so do not destroy these if you can avoid it. Some elders actually speak with these fallen werewolves to learn what they know. This is dangerous even to a seasoned elder, so do not ever think of trying it yourself. Another peril comes from the tainted humans called fomori. Some are Spiral Kin while others have willingly taken on taints to their bodies. Again, you should strike to kill and only then collect what remains to be examined by a Crescent Moon."

Other Shapeshifters

The Shaman fell into silence, and they watched the fire awhile. Jolon had apparently wandered away some time ago.

"I must also mention the other Changers, the Fera," Adoni broke the quiet. "They come in many shapes and sizes, and probably some have long vanished from the earth. I will tell you what I know."

Nuwisha

"Although Coyote is not native to Australia, his changing children have spread to almost every corner of the world. Still, the Americas are their homelands, and they live there in greatest numbers. The Uktena generally co-exist peace-

fully with them, sharing our lands and our fires in brotherhood. We are often willing to work with the Nuwisha, as they are swift and cunning spies."

Grandmother Spider

"Here is one who is wise, patient, cunning and cruel. She has taught us much in the past, but is not one to trifle with. Her sons and daughters are likewise dangerous but occasionally helpful. Still, before you make a bargain with her children, remember who Grandmother Spider is mated to."

Ravens

"Raven is one of our most sacred spirits, and Raven's brood, like the Nuwisha, are strong allies. They see much and will travel far to get what they know to the one who needs to know it. Be ready, for you must endure plenty of chatter before getting to the heart of the matter with these winged ones."

Lizards

"The werelizards are extremely rare, and only a few among the swamp-dwellers ever see them. The Stargazers say they are the descendents of dragons, which makes them sound quite dangerous. I for one would like to know if there is a kinship between Great Uktena and the lizards, but even in my long life, I have never come close to seeing one, as far as I know."

Bastet

"Of all the Cat-People, the only ones we might call allies are the Pumonca, werecougars. We were friendly enough before the Wyrmcomers showed up, and we helped them as best we could — given that we were under attack as well — during the Second War of Rage. The werelynxes called Qualmi are curious creatures indeed, and their love of riddles have distracted and delighted Uktena for days on end. It is ironic they spend most of their time in Wendigo territory, for Little Brother has no patience and little interest in riddles. The Balam make no distinction between Uktena and Wyrmcomers, so they are best avoided. Likewise, most other breeds of Cat-People will hate us on general principle."

Gurahl

"The werebears may be the rarest of all the Changers, and any you encounter deserve special protection. They can fight with a terrible fury, but mostly, they are gentle healers who have harmed no one. Give kindness to them and their Kin, and you will find yourself with a true friend for life."

Rat's Kin

"The Rat-People are more numerous than we would imagine, perhaps even more common than the Garou. They live in cities, but they seem to hate people. Then again they don't care much for us either. They are filthy creatures, but they know their way around the dark side of the cities. Their strength is in their greater numbers, so you and your pack should be wary of movement in the shadows."

Others

"Our Pacific tribemates, even some of those on shores north of here, describe encounters with Shark-People. They are cold, implacable and relentless. From the little I have heard, most have no interest in talk and would rather be left alone. They may fight for Gaia, but apparently anything from above the sea is more morsel than friend."

"Werebears, shark people, rat children — this is all quite a lot to take in!" Erishka exclaimed. "How many more can there possibly be?"

"Well, there really is not much else to tell," sighed Adoni. "The Wars of Rage finished off a number of the Changing Breeds, a great loss. Oh, wait, I almost forgot — there is some talk of werecobras in the Far East, though I have never seen any proof of them or heard any longer tales of their ways. Now, if we had some evidence on where to seek them, naturally many Uktena would risk much to find them." Erishka stared, open-mouthed, and the Shaman grinned. "But that is all for tonight, daughter. Time you shared my meal and took rest. I know the day has been long."

Adoni pulled some toasted witchetty grubs from the fire. A few weeks ago, Erishka might have hesitated, but now, she took the worm-like grubs gladly, finding they tasted like meaty nuts.

"So what's next?" asked the girl. "Has Jolon finished his business here?"

Her companion dibbled a stick in the embers. "Not quite. I believe he has to check out something near dawn tomorrow. Then, his task will be done."

Drought

Erishka wanted to keep sleeping when Jolon nudged her just before sunup. But then she remembered she *was* supposed to watch and protect him. If this was his last thing to settle, she'd better make sure he did it with no hitches.

The pair walked for several hours in the burning outback sun. Maybe it was December back home, but here, it was high summer. Jolon was red all over in spite of his wide-brimmed hat. The canteen he brought for them he'd emptied without sparing a drop for the werewolf, but she said nothing. At last Jolon made for a small alley among the rocky hills. It was shady there, but the red stone walls still radiated heat.

The alley ended suddenly in a large pool, ringed by walls so high that the sun could only touch the water now, at midday. Nothing else was there, just the two of them and the small pool. Jolon knelt by the water's edge, then looked up at Erishka. She returned the stare despite the fact that the glare off the Kinfolk's glasses hurt her eyes.

"What now?" she asked, her voice steady but wary. The silence around them seemed crushing.

"Depends on you," he replied, "on what you've learned." The unassuming, drifting quality was gone from his face; it now seemed harder. Hungrier.

"What I've learned?" She thought a moment, her eyes narrowed. "I've learned you are no mere Kinfolk. You wear the skin of a man, but there is nothing human about you."

"When did you figure it out?" He hissed, his smile growing broader.

"Are you kidding? There were hints from the day I met you. I'm not completely ignorant of our tribe, even before we met." She paused, and then bowed her head, "Great One."

"Heh. Not Great One, merely a child of his. You have survived your Rite of Passage. You are fit to be counted one of Uktena's Wolf-People."

"How many have taken this test?" she asked, curious.

"Many," came the answer from Jolon's toothy grin.

"And how many survived it?"

"Some. Tonight, I go hungry." He placed his fists against his chest. "Fare well, Walks-With-Uktena. You may go now, or stay. It is your choice."

"I know what to do," she replied, even as she turned her head away. "Thank you for your lessons, Honored One." As she started back out towards the desert, she heard the scrape of hide on stone, and the chuckle of rippling water. She halted, still facing the desert that writhed in the heat; she could almost hear the groaning of the land, the whisper of the wind. When minutes passed without sound behind her, she turned cautiously, not daring to breathe. No doom glared down at her, no ripple disturbed the pool. With silent tread she approached the water's edge. Spying a triangular object a little smaller than her palm, the Half-Moon reached for it. It was a deep red, with a white edge sharp enough to cut. Erishka placed the scale in the medicine pouch around her neck, and then knelt down until her face was a finger's width from the still water.

"Just now. I figured it out just now," she whispered. "It was a very good guess."

Chapter Three: Deep Waters

To speak [about mythic history] promiscuously or publicly may also be perilous, since its stories often remain imbued with the powerful forces that originally created the world and can still destroy it. Sometimes such reticence actually issues from consideration for the welfare of those not in the know.

— Peter Nabokov, *A Forest of Time*

The sons and daughters of Uktena all have a heavy burden: to guard against the darkness while seeking knowledge from the shadows. Yet one of the great strengths of the tribe is its ability to adapt to different ways of thinking. The Uktena cherish their ancient traditions and heritage even as they ponder new perspectives on old problems.

Uktena Folkways

Most cultures have a unique set of beliefs and ideologies that can be lumped together under the term *folkways*. Folkways include morals and mores, spiritual beliefs and even general habits. While not all Uktena will have the same folkways, the following should give players and Storytellers some ideas about the things that many Uktena hold dear.

Eye of the Beholder

In times past, most Uktena had the physical features of the indigenous peoples of North and South America; in other words, they usually had ruddy skin tone and straight black hair. When the Uktena made the important decision to include other "marginalized" people in their fold, such as former slaves, the new blood naturally changed the appearance of a "typical" Uktena. Today, Uktena in human form come in all shapes and sizes, with skin color ranging from fair to café au lait to dark chocolate, and hair of every shade and texture. What matters more to the tribe than physical appearance is a werewolf's understanding of Uktena's blessings... and burdens.

Tribal Connections

Most werewolves born on two legs spend the first 12 to 15 years of their lives immersed in the world of humans. In these formative years, society instills values, prejudices, cultural cues and beliefs. While the Change and subsequent indoctrination into Garou life radically alters those beliefs, the werewolf still sees the world through the filter of his old life. This is evident with the Uktena as much as anyone. An Uktena who grew up among Navajo traditionalists may couch her view of

Gaia in terms of Diné cosmology, whereas a Creek-blooded child raised in the city may be a typical Protestant middle-class in his outlook. Most Indian Uktena will be somewhere in between. And of course, the experiences of the "new" blood can be similarly mixed, from Gullah to Gucci. A shooting star falling in the north may be an omen of disaster for one Uktena, while another may find positive significance depending on his nation's beliefs; the city-born may just see a cool meteor.

Caerns dominated by Uktena of similar background tend to take on aspects of the local Indian nation. For example, in the Cherokee-dominated areas of the southern Appalachians, caerns are often laid out according to the significance of the cardinal directions. The graves of fallen Garou usually lie on the western side of the bawn — the direction of death. Living quarters can be found in the south or eastern sides whose associations are more auspicious. Sept leaders wear white while caern warders often wear red (symbolizing their metaphorical roles of Peace Chief and War Chief). The physical aspects of diversity are only part of the story. Differences shaped by experiences in arid deserts or humid swamps lend a richness and depth to the tribe as a whole — a richness, the Uktena believe, lacking in tribes that were more geographically limited in pre-Columbian times. When searching for the way to defeat a spirit, a dozen variations of an oft-told tale may present a clearer picture than any one version provides. The story of the argument between Spearcatcher and Yellow Fur (related in Chapter One) shows how this diversity can be a hindrance.

Needless to say, other human cultures the Uktena have welcomed into their fold have similar influences on behavior. An Uktena from the Sea Islands may honor the tradition of airing grievances before elders *before* bringing them to a formal moot, much as the Gullah and Geechee people speak their complaints before community leaders rather than a formal court.

A more common problem is that of social mores, many of which affect the individual at a fundamental level. For example, let's look at kinship. Most Intruders share a similar system of tracing kinship, a system that is not shared by the more traditional Indian cultures. While some nations are patrilineal like most European cultures, many are matrilineal, following bloodlines through women rather than men (in some societies, such as the pre-Columbian Creeks, the father isn't considered a blood relative). Clan affiliation complicates things further.

The differences in kinship rules may seem alien to the Intruders — and even between different Indian societies. To an individual from some Indian nations, marrying Kinfolk from her own clan may be just as abhorrent to her as mating with a sibling would be to a European. The fact that family histories have been forgotten over the years due to death, assimilation and indifference makes things even more difficult. An arch-traditionalist elder might discourage or even forbid the joining of her Kinfolk with an Uktena who can't recite his family affiliations. Needless to say, such intricacies confuse the lupus population to no end, and since most nations have "modernized" their kinship structure to be more in line with the dominant culture, hidebound elders find their opinions in this regard don't matter much anymore.

Having said all that, remember that no matter what culture the Uktena comes from, no matter how many Kinfolk he has or how prominent his status and position, the Change forever separates him from his old society. His pack and his new tribe become central to his social outlook, even if that outlook is colored by his old affiliations. He may dislike another nation out of ingrained habit, but an Uktena from that society is a brother.

The Spirit World

All Garou deal with the spirit world, but no tribe gives it their undivided attention like the Uktena do. Uktena deal with spirits by fair dealings or a respectable level of trickery. From the start, cubs are taught how to ingratiate themselves to favored spirits, or at least how to keep from annoying them. In wilderness septs, for example, Prayer for the Prey is almost always taught within a day or so of arrival. Those who treat spirit allies with respect earn the approval of their elders; those who abuse their spiritual relationships suffer swift punishment, lest they risk sullying the positive spiritual reputation of the tribe as a whole.

Caerns are often buzzing with spirits, some coming to watch the goings-on, many there to help by carrying messages, watching for intruders, or teaching Gifts and lore. While other tribes may relegate the bulk of spirit dealings to their Crescent Moons, it is the exceptional Uktena who *doesn't* have some idea of how to handle a typical spiritual encounter. An Uktena may be friendly or hostile towards a spirit, but she never takes it for granted.

Sacred Numbers

Uktena believe many numbers have spiritual significance. The most important is the number four. There are four principal directions, and the ritemaster makes sure to invoke the powers of the four before enacting potent rituals. Four is the number of elemental forces in the world. Other numbers (especially five, six, and seven) also hold cosmological significance, but four crops up in stories (a hero tries something three times before succeeding on the fourth) and rituals (the ritemaster may repeat certain sacred formulas four times).

Deliberation

To the Uktena, the Wyrmcomers like the sound of their voices too much. Sometimes they appear to talk so they don't have to listen to themselves think. They speak half-formed thoughts and half-full ideas; and the Pure Ones consider this rude at best and dangerous at worst. As a rule, Uktena don't speak unless they have something truly worthwhile to say, and even then they may think it "goes without saying." In a perfect world, there would be no need for taking back an ill-chosen phrase. A meeting of Uktena often consists of short, meaning-laden statements separated by long silences as each party considers what was said, what went unsaid, and what needs to be said or left unsaid next. This isn't to say there are no brash Uktena, just that even they know not to mouth off in front of outsiders. In other words, if you can't keep it to yourself, at least keep it in the family.

Naturally, few Garou understand (and fewer appreciate) this method of discussion. They resentfully attribute the silent treatment to the Uktena reputation for smugly hoarding secrets. And sometimes, they might be right — the more astute tribe members use the intruder's fear of silence as a way to get more information. As any good reporter knows, a wordless, expectant look may force the interviewee to divulge something he later regrets, simply to fill the void.

Uktena in mixed packs loosen up somewhat — after all, the pack is practically family — but more than that, some tribe members acquire the knack for the aptly named "small talk." They can blather continually about nothing of consequence, all the while watching reactions and listening intently to what others say. It's a nice way of manipulating conversations and coaxing others to lower their verbal guard. Elders accept the ploy as quite useful when dealing with outsiders — but they'd better not try the stunt in council!

The Need to Know

"What's in that warehouse?" "Who killed the new council member, and why?" "What spirit can teach me how to walk up the side of a skyscraper?" "Is that pack wandering through or squatting, and do they know we're here?" As a tribe, the Uktena consider the only thing better than a good mystery is solving it. But they have learned that information gathering is an ongoing process, not just a response to a given question. Listening to idle conversation, making contacts, doing favors for minor spirits with no obvious or immediate return — one never knows when a stray phrase will make some puzzle click. And even when a mystery stands bold enough to attract everyone's attention, sometimes the best way to look for clues is to direct your attention where everyone else *isn't* looking. So while a pack tracks down an obvious mystery, they keep an eye out for everything around them, for they never know when a vital clue might turn up in an unlikely and otherwise insignificant place.

One of the most challenging tasks facing all Uktena is deciding what to do with the dangerous knowledge they collect as a matter of course. This job most often falls to the Half-Moons and Crescent Moons, but no auspice is entirely free from the burden. Most Uktena know that keeping secrets too long is just as dangerous as telling too much to the wrong people, even if it doesn't seem this way to outsiders. So, they often dole out information in small parcels, both to protect the listener and to judge reactions. This unfortunately, often infuriates members of other tribes and adds to the Uktena's reputation as sneaky, sly manipulators. Uktena, on the other hand, see this merely as part of their duty to Garou society as a whole.

Backgrounds

Backgrounds provide an interesting way of fleshing out Uktena characters. They're useful in a chronicle, too, particularly if pack members have various Backgrounds. Calling in a favor from a Contact or Kinfolk, for example, can save the day. The following are some ideas and suggestions on how to best tailor the various Backgrounds to an Uktena character.

Allies

Uktena Allies are most often people who know better than to ask too many questions about the weird "quirks" their friend displays from time to time. They figure their buddy will tell when the time is right, though of course any Uktena who reveals her true nature to an outsider must have extraordinary reasons to do so. Often, Uktena maintain Allies that come from within their own cultures, whether they live on reservations or in cities. The Uktena want Allies who accept their friendship without gawking or asking stupid questions. Allies might include reservation law officers or politicians, medicine folk or wealthy patrons of the arts.

Ancestors

It should come as no surprise that many Uktena keep close ties with their ancestors. Garou draw strength and wisdom from those who have gone before. Conversely, one who does not honor (or whose actions bring shame to) her ancestors can expect little help from them — or from other spirits. She may even lose standing in the eyes of her living peers.

Contacts

In their searches for lost lore, Uktena connect with a wide assortment of folks. They actively cultivate Contacts who can provide useful information. Favored

Contacts might include anthropologists, museum curators, musicologists or even radical freedom fighters, depending on the culture in question. Uktena Contacts most often appreciate a *quid pro quo* exchange of information, although a monetary bribe is rarely scorned.

Dangerous Liaisons

Some Uktena dare to gather information where others fear to tread... from supernatural forces such as vampires or mages. This can be quite profitable, but also incredibly risky. An Uktena who has a supernatural Contact probably tries to keep it hush-hush for as long as possible, and the Contact herself isn't going to tell her own kind any details, either. Considering the nature of the Contact and how powerful she is, a Storyteller may want to raise the cost by one dot for this Background.

Fetish

Fetishes are more common here than in most other tribes. As might be expected, Uktena prefer natural materials for fetishes and talens. Metal is rarely used and plastic is unheard of. Klaives are practically nonexistent; those they do have are usually recovered in raids against tainted Garou. Talens and minor (i.e. Level One) fetishes are common among young Uktena. While such an item is useful, it is also a test of the cliath's responsibility. A Garou who abuses, loses or doesn't properly care for a spiritual item doesn't deserve anything more powerful. A cliath with a greater fetish surely is highly trusted (and under scrutiny) by the sept elders.

Kinfolk

Uktena cherish their Kin, both wolf and human. They enjoy the camaraderie and the sense of family. In turn, Uktena Kinfolk generally support the sept with whatever skills and help they can provide. Many join in the celebrations and dances of the Uktena, and some are even trusted with vital secrets. It isn't unusual for an Uktena character to have two or more dots of this Background.

Mentor

The Uktena have long-standing traditions about teaching the young; it's not so much about school or books as it is watching and learning from elders. Thus the role of mentor to student is almost sacred in its depth. The bond is a deep one, and most often, not just one but several elders mentor the Uktena youth. The player should purchase this Background at four dots if he has a small group of Mentors, Rank 4 or under; purchase at a cost of five dots if any of the Mentors are Rank 5.

Pure Breed

While a few of the heroic bloodlines have flowed largely unbroken since the days when legends were new, in general the mixing of Kinfolk has diluted this trait. Though not unheard of, Pure Breed is more rare here than in other tribes.

Resources

Given that the tribe draws its Kinfolk from oppressed peoples, many Uktena are impoverished by modern standards. Material wealth means little compared to strong family and spiritual ties, but ready cash does have its uses. Of course, there are exceptions, and some Kin have managed to pull themselves up the social ladder. Also, many nations have garnered quite a bit of cash by developing natural resources or running businesses such as casinos or tourist-related operations.

Rites

In a tribe so closely attuned to the spirit world, knowing a ritual or two is practically a graduation requirement for a young Uktena. Minor rites are quite common, and young tribe members are taught how to appease spirits before learning how to ask anything of them.

Totem

Uktena tend to seek a spiritual guide soon after being declared Cliath. It is not unheard of for a Rite of Passage to include a vision quest for a totem. For that matter, a few know at First Change (or even before) who their totem will be. That said, some Uktena take a fair bit of time before choosing (or being chosen by) a spirit. While not highly common, personal totems are not so rare as in other tribes — nor are they looked upon with quite so much suspicion. While a totem cements the bonds of a pack, some spirits don't like to share "their" werewolf with anyone.

Abilities

The following new Abilities are particularly appropriate for Uktena, as they reflect the importance of cultural traditions to the tribe.

Gesture (Talent)

"I dunno what he's saying, but he looks pretty excited," muttered the young Ahroun as he squinted at the distant Ragabash through fogging binoculars. "He's waving at us. Why doesn't he just swim the river? Okay, he's holding up... four fingers. Pointing at his boot? Now he's waving in a circle... no, a spiral. Pointing behind us.... "

"Um, what color are his boots?" asked the Theurge as he stopped wrestling with his backpack.

"Er, black, why?"

"Run, we've got Black Spirals after us!" Already loping towards the river, the Crescent Moon called over his shoulder, "Remind me to challenge you for alpha when we get home, you moron."

Many nations had their own gesture languages for communicating secretly, communicating with the deaf, or for sacred purposes. Sign languages were also used as "trade tongues" to facilitate communication between nations who shared no other common speech. Even when no codified gesture languages exist between two strangers, a clever traveler can get his point across with hand movements, posture and expressive eyes. Even today, when language barriers are rarely a problem (since the majority of Uktena speak passable English), silent communication can be vital, especially when the Weaver's tools make eavesdropping so easy. The Gesture Talent demonstrates a person's ability to get a point across through the body's motions, or to pick up on what someone else is trying to express. The Uktena are one of a handful of tribes who possess a codified sign language. Hand-Talk, as it is simply known, is bought as a regular language using the Linguistics Knowledge, but a high Gesture rating will allow a character to understand the less esoteric parts of Hand-Talk. In addition, many packs make their own system of Gestures to communicate silently in the field.

- • Novice: You can go a little beyond "You, Me, Up, Down."
- •• Practiced: In foreign lands you can find food and bathrooms with a minimum of fuss.
- ••• Competent: "Five fomori, around the corner, with rifles...."
- •••• Expert: When you can make your hands sing like this, spoken words just get in the way.
- ••••• Master: Given time, you bet you could pantomime *War and Peace*.

Possessed by: Travelers, packmates, comedians

Specialties: Patrol signals, trade signs, rude gestures

MET: This Ability allows you to use the *Linguistics* gesture when communicating (one hand raised and prominently making an "L"), save that you may instruct those nearby that they hear nothing, and understand less unless they also possess *Gesture*. Alternately, you and your pack could just devise your own hand signals, subject to Storyteller approval.

Stickball (Talent)

Jinking and weaving, Nate dodged every defender who had broken past his teammates. Perpetual grin firmly in place, he launched the towa even as the goalkeeper slammed into him with enough force to make the audience wince. The ball cracked against the goal post and the local boys cheered.

"Wow, he's good!" exclaimed Martha, a newcomer to the sept. "Took a hard hit, though. I thought this intertribal match was just an exhibition."

"He is good," her older friend replied. "But to these guys, there's no such thing as an exhibition. To them, it's war with rules. Everything's about prepping for the next mission, and toli games are just part of their training regimen."

In long-ago days, many nations played stickball. At its heart, the game is about getting a ball to a goal while the opposition uses any means necessary to prevent this — earning the game the nickname "little brother of war." Sometimes chiefs would settle disputes with stickball instead of warfare (which ended up meaning that instead of dying his warriors would only suffer a few broken bones) Games sometimes involved hundreds of players, and goals could be miles distant. A direct ancestor to lacrosse, stickball is still played among some southeastern nations. Depending on tribal variation, players wield one or two sticks to scoop up a small cloth-and-leather covered rock. It's athletic, and (again, depending on tribal variation and team inclination) can be pretty violent.

- • Novice: You know which end of the stick(s) to hold.
- •• Practiced: You know enough to ask whose rules today's game uses.
- ••• Competent: You've mastered the subtle differences between an illegal tackle and a legal "body check."
- •••• Expert: When the dust settles, you always get away with the ball.
- ••••• Master: You own the field.

Possessed by: Indian athletes and a few wannabe-Indian athletes.

Specialties: Goalkeeping, sprints, grabs, throws, tribal variations.

MET: This Ability may be used in place of *Athletics*, *Brawl* or *Melee* when engaged in traditional games of the appropriate nature. Note that no matter what the situation might be, this Ability can *never* be used in combat.

Tribal Lore (Knowledge)

"Yeah, Dustin, I tried to talk to the old guy about those lights on the mesa. He wouldn't speak to me, just sat around like an idiot smoking that damn pipe." The new arrival shook his head in disgust.

"That's because he was embarrassed to be in the presence of a fool. You've been here for months and you still don't have a clue, do you? There's a helluva lot of custom and etiquette that's flying clear over your head. You're like a lupus cub at a tea party." The older man sighed. "Look, we'll go back up there tomorrow. I'll talk to him and you stay in the car. And bring lunch," he added. "This will take a while."

You know the traditions and lore of a native culture (usually the one you grew up in). This includes legends, cosmology, crafts and societal rules. The culture can be from wherever the Uktena draw their Kin — Cherokee, Hopi, Gullah, Kikuyu, or maybe from the native peoples of Australia or Vietnam. Knowing how to do things makes it much easier to get along in traditional society — and makes the society's elders more likely to talk with you. Familiarity with custom and practice also lets you pick up on when things aren't quite right, socially or spiritually. Finally, a good grasp of the legends and their significance has allowed Uktena to discover clues to ancient evils and lost fetishes; more than one Theurge has managed to reverse-engineer a lost rite through comparing different versions of an old medicine tale. Depending on the situation and at the Storyteller's discretion, Tribal Lore can be used in place of Etiquette when dealing with the given culture.

- • Novice: When in doubt, call the old lady Grandmother. It's polite.
- •• Practiced: You know the short version of your people's history. You can grasp kinship structure if your tribe follows a different standard.
- ••• Competent: You've studied, you've listened. Religion, folklore, how to address the tribal council — you know something about everything.
- •••• Expert: You are invited to speak at tribal councils and anthropology seminars.
- ••••• Master: Medicine men listen to your tales to see if they missed anything.

Possessed by: Anthropologists, reservation dwellers, Half-Moons and Crescent Moons

Specialties: Ritual art, music, life-passage ceremonies

Gifts

Uktena Gifts often relate to aspects of water, discovery and trickery. Uktena ancestor spirits teach many of these Gifts, and they're generally selfish about teaching outsiders.

• **Strut (Level One)** — This Gift, taught by a crane- or turkey-spirit, allows a Garou to appear physically grander and more impressive than he truly is.

System: By taking a turn to strike a pose (puff up the chest, brandish a weapon while sounding a war-whoop, and so on) while the player makes a Manipulation + Intimidation roll (difficulty 6), the werewolf appears to be bigger, better and more impressive. This can be used to throw an advancing Black Spiral Dancer off his stride or convince the biker he should find another chick to flirt with. The effects last for a scene, or until the Garou's impressive appearance is in some way belied (like getting knocked on his tail for instance).

MET: *Basic* Gift. By making a suitably impressive display and making a Social test (retest *Intimidation*), the

Uktena can cause their target to think twice about interfering with her business. This Gift does not cause a determined foe to run off screaming or a wary guard to neglect his duty, but it can easily deter most casual interest and make it harder for more dedicated foes to face the Garou. Those affected by this Gift pick another target or activity unless their interest is truly compelling, and even then they are two Traits down on all tests against the Garou until they score a victory. Supernatural foes may cancel this effect with a Willpower Trait.

• **Implacable Grip (Level One)** — Sometimes, sheer tenacity gets the job done. With this Gift, the Uktena can hang on by claw or bite with a deathgrip that is almost impossible to break. Gila monster or alligator-spirits teach this Gift.

System: As per the Silver Fang Gift: Falcon's Grasp

• **Blending (Level Two)** — Intruder legends tell of the uncanny ability of native peoples to hide in plain sight, even only yards away. This Gift allows the user to blend into the landscape simply by crouching and keeping still. It isn't invisibility; rather, the Garou draws the landscape into himself to appear to the unwary as a natural part of the terrain. This Gift is especially common among caern guardians. Any stealthy spirit, such as chameleon, teaches this Gift.

System: The Garou stands among terrain features (trees, thickets, etc) or simply hunkers down and wills herself to be one with the environment. A searcher must make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 9) to recognize the Garou as something more interesting than a stump, and the expenditure of a Gnosis point negates three successes (this includes scent as well as sight). If the searcher is looking directly away, the Garou may move slowly in any direction, but even the slowest movement while in the searcher's field of view reveals her instantly.

MET: *Basic* Gift. This Gift is identical to the Ragabash Gift: *Blissful Ignorance*, except for two differences. Due to the Uktena's innate connection to the wilderness, it may only be performed outdoors, in a natural environment. However, unlike *Blissful Ignorance*, the Uktena may move at a slow walk and remain undetected, provided all onlookers are looking directly away; as a rule of thumb, if the player can see more than the back of an onlooker's head, she can't move and hope to remain undetected. Talking, fighting, interacting with the environment (such as opening a door) or moving while another is watching immediately cancels this Gift.

• **Overlook (Level Two)** — It can be quite useful to be ignored at times. You can overhear what was not meant for your ears, or see armed guards look right past you. As long as the Uktena keeps a low profile, a supervisor will assume he's just another tech, or the cowboys will see only "some tame Injun asleep by the hitchin' post." Some Ragabash call this the "Tonto goes to town" Gift; members of the Scouts also favor it. A cuckoo-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The character does his best to look nonchalant or otherwise occupied doing something low-key. The player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty varies depending on how well he blends in to start with: 6 if the Garou is dressed in the same manner and going through the same motions as the techies around him; up to 9 if he's stark naked and carrying a bloody axe). To see the Garou as more than mere window-dressing, watchers must get more successes on Perception + Alertness than the player originally rolled. Should he draw attention to himself, by acting out of character or speaking loudly for example, the player must reroll with a penalty of +2 difficulty in order to maintain the effect.

MET: *Basic* Gift. By dressing the part and doing her best to blend in, the Uktena can ensure that all but the most cautious scrutiny overlooks her presence. To activate this Gift, the player must make a Mental test (retest *Subterfuge*) against a difficulty based on how much the Uktena looks like those where she's trying to fit in and how vigilant the security in the area happens to be. For instance, dressing up in business clothes and slipping into a large office on a hectic morning would be relatively easy, but trying to do so without proper work attire would be more difficult, and attempting to blend in on the morning of a personnel review would be even harder. An Uktena may attempt to blend in with more than one group of people, but doing so requires a new Mental test and likely a change of clothes as well

Success means that as long as the Uktena keeps a low profile, she is essentially ignored by those around her, who assume that she is just another one of crowd. A description tag reading "Ignore Me" or similar method should be used to alert others to her forgettable status. Those attempting to pierce this disguise must either possess supernatural senses or be actively looking for an intruder, and defeat the Uktena in a Mental test. The Narrator may also call for additional Mental tests during the scene if the Uktena acts out of character, calls attention to herself or is caught lacking critical props or knowledge ("What do you mean you don't have an ID card? Everybody around here has one"). Note also that this is not true invisibility — an Uktena attempting to sneak into a guarded facility will still be stopped by security like everyone else in the group she's with. It also does not function if there is no group to blend into; an Uktena trying to pass herself off as a

store employee to a small business owner who runs the store with his wife won't be fooled.

• **Another's Moccasins (Level Two)** — The human cultures of Uktena Kinfolk are too-frequently ignored or derided by the mainstream; their wolf Kin are persecuted as a matter of course. This Gift opens the eyes of the ignorant to life on the other side, showing them a new and (for a while, at least) fascinating perspective. By speaking briefly with the subject about the culture or species in question, the Garou can instill curiosity or appreciation for the culture — or if particularly successful, an obsession with learning about and aiding the Kinfolk's people. The Earth Guides in particular use this Gift to nudge adversaries (usually in government or the media) into the role of allies. An ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The character must have the subject's undivided attention and engage in a brief conversation about the culture in question (for instance, the Navajo or wolves). The player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty is 9 minus the subject's Intelligence). For one success, the subject may pick up a Hillerman novel, or admit to himself that wolves were important to the balance of nature, at least before humans changed things. For five successes, he might well involve himself in humanitarian efforts on the reservation, or spend his vacation trekking to Alaska in the hopes of having a Farley Mowat experience with a wolf pack. The Gift's effects last about a week per success, but with luck a natural interest develops as the subject delves into his study of the culture.

MET: *Basic* Gift. This Gift requires that the Uktena first enter into a detailed conversation with her target about a particular species or culture for at *least* ten minutes, and then spend a Willpower Trait and make a Social test (retest *Subterfuge*). Success means that the target becomes interested in learning more about and possibly aiding the culture or species involved in the conversation, and spends a good portion of their next downtime actively pursuing these goals, up to a maximum of one month. If downtime is not a factor in the game, then the interest lasts for the rest of the current session and the entire next one as well.

At the end of this time the Gift's effects fade, although it's entirely possible the target has come to be interested in the subject naturally and thus continues his work after the Gift itself has ended. It should also be noted that even use of this Gift to stir a desire to help a culture the Uktena belongs to does not mean the target becomes glassy-eyed and immediately does whatever the Uktena asks — their goodwill is directed toward the culture or species in general, and while they may be more open to aiding the Garou than they were before, they are not compelled to do anything for them. Player characters may cancel the need to act on this Gift directly with a Willpower Trait, though even then they should still roleplay their new interest and perhaps some minor actions taken to investigate it.

• **Reveal the Hidden (Level Two)** — This Gift allows an Uktena to find non-supernatural items that may be eluding his search. This is a perfect tool to locate hidden passageways, concealed tomes of lore or a normal foe that may be successfully hiding from the werewolves. A Crow spirit teaches the Gift. Scouts (and their darker campmates, the Raiders) consider this Gift practically a requisite.

System: The werewolf spends a turn to look around carefully, the player makes a Perception + Subterfuge roll. One success at difficulty 7 is all that is needed to spot the hidden object. However, a sentient creature that is hiding may counter with a Wits + Stealth roll; if his successes exceed that of the werewolf player's roll, the Gift doesn't work.

MET: *Basic* Gift. By spending a Mental Trait and naming a single person or object, the Uktena immediately finds it, provided it is in the immediate area and the Uktena is somehow capable of detecting it (however well hidden). For example, the Uktena could not locate a spirit with this Gift unless she had a Gift or other means of sensing spirits active at the time. If more than one object or person in the area matches the criteria, the Gift does not reveal them all — instead the Uktena receives an impression that there is more than one item or individual matching her description, but not how many or where they are. In addition, while the search criteria for objects can be fairly general — saying simply "gun" as opposed to ".357 Magnum" — it cannot be relative to a person or event, such as asking for "the murder weapon" or "whatever it was that just fell out of his pocket."

Finding a sentient being in hiding requires a Mental test (retest *Subterfuge*), though the Uktena receives a free retest on such challenges due to the Gift's effectiveness. As above, the criteria for finding a person can be somewhat generic — "man" or "woman with brown hair" — but it cannot be relative, such as "a woman who will find me attractive" or "the man who murdered my father." This Gift cannot detect supernatural items and individuals concealed by mystical powers at all.

• **Coils of the Serpent (Level Two)** — Using this Gift, an Uktena can call forth dark tentacles of mist or fog that wrap around enemies and hold them in a viselike grip. Each coil is four feet long and possesses the same Physical characteristics as the werewolf who summons the coils. Any snake-spirit can teach this Gift.

System: The player rolls Dexterity + Occult, difficulty 7. Each success causes a single coil to come forth from the surrounding air. The coils focus on a single target, unless the player makes attack rolls against multiple targets, with the normal penalties to the rolls for multiple actions. The coils only bind; they can't inflict damage. To break free, the victim must make a Strength roll, difficulty 7. If his successes exceed the number of coils, he's free. If not, he's still a prisoner. The tentacles last until the end of the scene or until the summoner decides to send them away.

MET: *Basic* Gift. Once per scene, an Uktena with this Gift can summon tentacles of fog to bind and slow opponents. One tentacle is summoned per level of *Occult* the Uktena possesses, plus an additional tentacle per Physical Trait the user wishes to spend when activating the Gift. A Physical test (retest *Occult*) is necessary to ensnare a target with this Gift; the Uktena is considered a number of Traits up on this test equal to the number of tentacles attacking the target. The Uktena may also choose to have summoned tentacles focus on multiple targets, up to a maximum number of separate targets equal to their *Occult* rating. Treat use against multiple targets like a standard group challenge. Those successfully ensnared by tentacles can defend themselves normally, but cannot attack or move from their current location until they break free, which requires a Physical test against a difficulty equal to twice the Uktena's *Occult* rating plus the number of tentacles currently grappling them. These tentacles do not inflict damage, and last until the end of the scene, the target frees himself or the caster dismisses them.

• **Indian Giver (Level Two)** — Sometimes, one must give information to get information. Perhaps an explanation is necessary to get the curious to go away. However, Uktena are notoriously tightfisted with secrets. With this Gift, the Uktena can share a bit of knowledge that later vanishes from the subject's memory. An ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift. Both Raiders and Pathdancers commonly learn this Gift, though it can be found throughout the tribe.

System: When telling the choice bit of lore, the player rolls Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty is the opponent's Wits + Subterfuge). The number of successes, shown below, determines the effects of the Gift. The Uktena decides beforehand how long the knowledge remains clear, but never longer than 24 hours.

Success	Effect
Botch	Secret retained with unusual clarity
One	Secret becomes elusive and garbled
Two	Secret is maddeningly beyond reach.
Three	Subject forgets he was told the secret
Four	Subject's own part in discussion is vague
Five	Subject forgets the conversation took place

MET: *Basic* Gift. With this crafty Gift, the Uktena can ensure that she gets the upper hand in an exchange of secrets, by removing the knowledge they imparted from the target's memory. This Gift requires a Mental test (retest *Subterfuge*) against the target, and can only be performed *after* the Uktena has told the target the secret in question. If successful, the target immediately forgets what they were told at a point determined by the Uktena (never more than 24 hours after); with the expenditure of a Willpower Trait, the Uktena can cause them to forget the entire conversation. The target is otherwise able to remember the general conversation, including giving the Uktena information, but is completely unable to remember what he got in return. Mortals are likely to simply blame bad memory, though some supernatural creatures (particularly those versed in mind control and memory tricks) may realize what's going on. A suspicious supernatural creature may cancel the Uktena's Willpower expenditure with one of his own if he wishes to remember more about the conversation, though he is still be unable to recall the secret banished by this Gift, as it has been completely removed from his mind.

• **Uktena's Freezing Stare (Level Two)** — The Uktena can use this Gift to mesmerize an opponent by making direct eye contact. If the Gift is successful, the target freezes dead in his tracks. A spirit of Uktena teaches the Gift.

System: First, the Uktena must make direct eye contact with an opponent; the player then rolls Manipulation + Intimidation to activate the Gift, with the difficulty equal to the target's Willpower. The paralysis lasts one scene or until the opponent is physically or mentally attacked in some fashion.

MET: *Basic* Gift. As the Homid Gift: *Staredown*, save that all manner of targets freeze in their tracks; none flee. The same restrictions against being physically or mentally attacked still apply.

• **Death Trance (Level Three)** — Sometimes, death is the only way out. But that doesn't mean you want to stay that way. With this Gift, the Uktena may appear dead, following the expected progression (lividity, rigor, etc.) well enough to fool a forensics team. While "dead," the Uktena is in a muted state, unable to move; his senses are still active but dulled and dreamlike. The danger is reviving, as the effort required to return to the living increases with time, and eventually the character is no longer feigning. An opossum-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: It takes a Gnosis point, a Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 6) and three turns to "die." Once in a

state of "death," the body cools and exhibits all the normal signs of death at the proper rate of progression for environmental conditions (Players would do well to look through a forensics manual for hints). To realize something isn't right, observers must make a Perception + Investigation roll (difficulty 7) and achieve at least the same number of successes the "dead" werewolf achieved. A view from the Penumbra shows the spirit still resides in the body, but appears to be in some kind of Slumber. During this death trance, the Uktena need not breathe, but fire and such can still hurt him badly. Physical wounds do not bleed until the trance is lifted, but neither do they heal.

The character may hear, smell, and see (assuming his eyes are open) while in the death trance, but all rolls to perceive anything are at +2 difficulty.

The Death Trance Gift lasts as long as the Uktena wishes. However, to wake at any time during the first day requires a successful Willpower roll difficulty 4 (to fully revive requires three turns, plus one turn per day spent in a death state). Every day after that the difficulty increases by 1. If the Garou fails to wake in time, he must wait a day before trying again (although the Storyteller may make allowances, such as friends trying to wake him, or he finds himself on a pyre). After a number of days equal to the character's permanent Gnosis rating, his spirit slips loose from the husk and the character dies. As it is, some Uktena have eventually figured out they were being buried, but weren't able to care enough to do anything about it for a long time.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. With the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait and ten seconds of relaxed concentration, the Uktena can enter a state that imitates death down to the smallest detail. He does not breathe, wounds do not bleed (or regenerate), rigor and lividity set in, etc. Only those who have some reason to suspect the Garou is faking may make a Mental test to discern the truth (retest with *Investigation*).

• **Sing Down the Rain (Level Three)** — This Gift is used to bring rain from the heavens, either to nourish crops and cleanse the land, or to cause damage through mudslides and flooding. This Gift is common among Ghost Dancers. A frog-spirit teaches the Gift.

System: The Garou sings or howls a ritual chant; the player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Wits + Occult (difficulty is ordinarily 7; 8 in a cloudless desert, 6 in a temperate rainforest). One or two successes brings down a misty drizzle after a short delay, but three successes causes a heavy rain to fall almost immediately. Four or more successes means the rain comes in heavy torrents. The effects ordinarily last one scene, but the player may spend Gnosis to continue the effects. Depending on the Storyteller, the terrain and the user's intent, the effects may cause flooding, mudslides or even wash away pollutants.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. With a Gnosis Trait and a suitable (not stereotypical) performance, the Uktena can call down a nourishing rainfall. Following an appropriate ceremony, the Uktena makes Mental test (retest *Occult*), with a difficulty depending on the local environment and weather conditions. Calling rain in a parched desert or during a lengthy drought is extremely difficult, while standing in a rainforest or under an overcast sky is much easier. Success means that a steady, heavy rain begins in the next ten minutes and falls for the remainder of the scene; the Storyteller has final say over what game effect the rain has, if any. This Gift may be extended for additional scenes by spending extra Gnosis Traits.

• **Wisdom of the Ancient Ways (Level Three)** — Werewolves have a link to their past most humans can only dream about: their ancestors can still share their wisdom. The ancestor-spirit that teaches this Gift allows the Uktena even deeper access to past lifetimes of wisdom and lore. Naturally, Earth Guides are most likely to learn this Gift.

System: As the Philodox Gift.

• **Lay of the Land (Level Four)** — The Uktena with this Gift may commune with spirits of the land and air, learning many things such as abundance of game, location and strength of watercourses, health of the forest, and even where caves can be found. Any mobile animal spirit (fox, eagle, etc) can teach this Gift.

System: As per the Bone Gnawer Gift: Attunement, except that it works in rural or wilderness rather than urban areas, and the required roll is Perception + Survival.

• **Spirit's Horse (Level Four)** — A potent Gift, Spirit's Horse allows an Uktena to turn his body into a temporary home for an ancestor-spirit or other important creature from the time of legends. This Gift provides more than the memories and abilities associated with the Ancestors Background because for a brief time, the Uktena actually *becomes* the spirit who inhabits his body. The intent of the Gift is to honor an ancestor by allowing her to physically take part in a ceremony or moot, meet her descendents and share in the joys of the physical world. The Rite of Invitation to the Ancestors is often used in conjunction with this Gift, and these events almost never take place outside a tribal moot or council. An ancestor-spirit teaches the Gift.

System: This is a Gift with both incredible risks and marvelous benefits. To begin the process, the player rolls Charisma + Occult, difficulty 8; however, the Storyteller may choose to lower the difficulty by one if the summoner has some sort of special rapport

with the spirit to be summoned. Perhaps the Uktena is a direct descendant or has somehow done honor to the spirit beforehand. In any case, the Ancestors Background isn't required to use the Gift. One or two successes means the spirit comes into the werewolf's body, but for a brief time (one scene). Three or four successes means the spirit remains for several scenes. Five successes means the bond is so complete, the spirit may stay until requested to depart. No successes indicates the spirit doesn't come, but a botch means that either the spirit refuses to leave or that the spirit inhabiting the body is not the one summoned; she must be pacified before leaving.

The player must make a Willpower roll, difficulty 7, for the Uktena to remain aware of what's going on around him, though he can't interact with the spirit. Simple failure means that he is effectively "unconscious" while the ancestor-spirit is present. For all intents and purposes, the character *is* the ancestor, enabling the long-dead spirit to talk, dance and otherwise interact with werewolves in the present. The player may make a final Willpower roll at difficulty 7 before the spirit departs to remember what happened while serving as a host for the ancestor-spirit.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. With a ritual at least five minutes in duration and a Social test (retest *Occult*), the Uktena can summon an ancestor-spirit into her body for the remainder of the scene. In essence, she *is* the spirit for the duration. For three Gnosis Traits, the duration can be extended to the remainder of the session. (The host retains their normal game statistics; only the memories and personality of the spirit are transferred.) If the Uktena has a particularly strong rapport with the spirit to be summoned — packmate, descendent, close friend, protégé, etc. — she receives a free retest on the Gift's activation challenge. While this Gift offers primarily roleplaying benefits, an Uktena who routinely uses it with appropriate respect for the ancestors stands to gain great Wisdom Renown, as well as earn a positive reputation with the local spirit community in general. If a question regarding the spirit's knowledge comes up, a Narrator may be consulted to represent the spirit accessing its memories, though those greedy to abuse this Gift as a way to augment or entirely circumvent the need for the *Ancestors* Background risk gravely offending their ancestors and suffering an according drop in Wisdom, and may even find this Gift fails them until they have learned appropriate humility.

This Gift is not without risk, either — when the Uktena successfully activates this Gift, she must immediately make a Simple Test. On a win or a tie, she retains knowledge of what is going on while her body is inhabited, though the ancestor-spirit is still in control. On a loss, she is essentially "unconscious" for the duration of the Gift, and must make another Simple Test immediately — failing this second test means that she won't remember anything that happens during the Gift's duration. Willpower may be spent to retest either of these Simple Tests. While by no means a malevolent possession, some spirits may get still their hosts in trouble as they attempt to enjoy a taste of life or seek out contact with old friends... or enemies. Players of "unconscious" characters should do their best to roleplay their subsumed state as well as any following memory loss, and it is perfectly fair for a Narrator to assume control of any characters whose players attempt to unfairly avoid or downplay their controlled state.

• **Guardian's Fortitude (Level Four)** — In desperate times the Uktena must call upon their endurance reserves to be vigilant, whether it is a Theurge locked in a multi-day rite, a Bane-Tender waiting vainly for reinforcements, or a lone warrior holding a mountain pass with no hope of retreat. This Gift gives them the strength to stave off the needs of the body in order to focus on the daunting task at hand. Those needs are not erased but merely deferred, however, so this ancestor-spirit-taught Gift is used only at great need. Many Bane-Tenders learn this Gift.

System: To use the Gift the player spends a Gnosis point and succeeds in a Willpower roll (difficulty 6); the Gift lasts one day per success. During this time, the Garou can stay sharp without needing food, water, or sleep. If necessary, the Gift can be extended by spending one Willpower for every additional twelve hours. Once the Gift ends, the accrued effects of hunger, muscle fatigue and lack of sleep all rush back. The exact effects are up to the Storyteller, but after several days of intense activity and the resulting sleep-depravation psychosis the least one could expect is an immediate roll to Frenzy followed by Willpower rolls to do anything except eat, drink and sleep.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. This Gift has two uses: downtime and during a game session. During downtime, an Uktena using this desperate Gift spends a Gnosis Trait and makes a number of Simple Tests equal to their Willpower rating; for each such test they win or tie, they may go one day without suffering any ill effects due to lack of food, water or sleep. They may also choose to spend Willpower Traits to increase the duration, with each such Trait adding an additional twelve hours to the vigil. Willpower cannot be regained naturally for the duration of this Gift, and when it is over the Uktena must immediately make a Rage test to avoid frenzy, as well as spend a Willpower Trait to do anything other than eat, drink and sleep.

During a game session, this Gift allows an Uktena to heighten their senses and remain alert while standing guard or watching over a particular person or location. Starting such a vigil costs one Gnosis Trait, and lasts for the rest of the session so long as the Uktena does not stray from their appointed purpose or until they next enter combat. During this time, the Uktena ignores all Trait penalties except wound penalties on any challenges related to watching over their charge, and is considered to have the bonus Traits *Vigilant* x2 and *Enduring* x2, which can be bid and lost as normal.

• **Uktena's Glare (Level Five)** — Just as the anger within Great Uktena burns those who dare to face him, so can the follower of Uktena sear foes with his own Rage. To one who is worthy, Uktena may teach this Gift.

System: The Garou concentrates for a full turn, focusing on the anger that burns within. Meeting the gaze of a single foe, he must spend a Rage point and make a roll as if to frenzy. If successful, the Uktena does not frenzy but inflicts one level of aggravated damage per success just from his heated gaze. The difficulty to use this Gift increases by one with each subsequent attempt during the same scene.

MET: *Advanced* Gift. By focusing on a foe with her gaze, the Uktena may take a normal action and spend a Rage Trait to activate this Gift. Doing so requires intense concentration — the Uktena cannot move, is considered to act last that turn and suffers a two-Trait penalty to defend herself against any attacks while activating this Gift. Provided her opponent is still in sight when her action at last arrives, she makes a number of Simple Tests equal to her permanent Rage rating; for each test she wins or ties, her foe suffers a level of aggravated damage. Only one foe may be targeted at a time, and no opponent may be targeted with this Gift more than once per scene. Armor is effective against this damage, but this attack cannot be dodged or "soaked" short of supernatural levels of endurance; opponents with powers that convert or reduce damage (such as vampiric *Fortitude*) may attempt to modify the damage normally.

• **Becoming Uktena (Level Six)** — The legends of the Cherokee say that a man was transformed into the Great Uktena to try to kill the sun. Great Uktena was around long before the Cherokee, but Garou have taken the form of his children on two or three occasions. Great Uktena teaches this Gift only to the most worthy of his Uktena followers; with it, the hero may transform into a creature even a Thunderwyrm would fear. After the crisis is resolved (assuming he lives), the new uktena slips into the nearest body of water and into the umbra, forever parting with his Garou brethren to join his father in Galunlati. Such a glorious end to an already legendary career is worthy of fireside retellings for generations.

Transforming Uktena

Here are sample stats for a Garou in the intermediate phase of Becoming Uktena.

Attributes: Strength 9, Dexterity 4, Stamina 8, Charisma 0, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Rage 8, Gnosis 8, Willpower 6

Abilities: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 3, Subterfuge 2, Stealth 3, Knowledges as per Character with the following changes: Enigmas +1, Occult +2, Galunlati Lore +1

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -2, -5, -5, Inc

Attacks: Antler rush (Str +1), Bite (Str+2)

Powers: Armor (+5 dice to soak), Breathe Water, Burrow (as per Metis Gift), Blast (as per the charm)

Note: This uktena is roughly 20 feet long, and while powerful, harbors same weak spot — a heart shot can kill instantly (see Lesser Uktena spirit, below).

System: Once taught the Gift, the Uktena may call upon it at any time by invoking Great Uktena. The initial stage of the transformation takes three full turns, during which the werewolf's body grows and changes to a 20' foot horned serpent. The new uktena still retains the personality of the Garou at this point. After a period of time (usually no more than a scene), the final stage of the transformation begins as the mind of the Garou recedes and the uktena mindset takes over. The spirit creature heads unerringly towards the nearest source of water wide enough to encompass its diameter (not necessarily its whole bulk). As it slides into the water and crosses the Gauntlet, the transformation is complete; the hero's former pack had best treat this uktena like any other of its kind.

MET: *Advanced* Gift. Once learned, this Gift may only ever be used once, and then only by Uktena that have proven themselves worthy in the eyes of Great Uktena. This Gift costs nothing to activate, but requires three full turns for the transformation to take effect — during this time, the Garou retains her old statistics, and can only defend herself, not attack. At the end of this time, the Garou has become a transforming uktena, a fearsome creature easily the rival of many sizable Banes and other menaces. Transformation is a one-way trip, however — while the Uktena retains her own person-

ality for the remainder of the current scene or conflict, at the end of this time the Storyteller assumes control and the new uktena flees as described above, never to return. A heroic end, to be sure, but an end nonetheless. The statistics for a transformed uktena are as follows, except where noted, these statistics replace the Garou's own, not add to them:

Physical Traits: 28, **Social Traits:** 3, **Mental Traits:** 14

Rage: 8, **Gnosis:** 8, **Willpower:** 6

Abilities: As per the character, with the exception that they receive the following Abilities (unless their own levels are higher, in which case they retain their own level): *Athletics* x3, *Brawl* x3, *Dodge* x2, *Intimidation* x3, *Subterfuge* x2, *Stealth* x3. In addition, they automatically receive an additional level of *Enigmas* and two levels of *Occult*, even if this takes them over five levels in total

Health Levels: Healthy x2, Bruised x4, Wounded x5, Incapacitated, Mortally Wounded

Attacks: Antler rush for one level of lethal damage, bite for two levels

Powers: Armor (free retest on all tests to resist damage), Breathe Water, Burrow (as the Metis Gift), Blast (as the charm)

Note: The Uktena form is enormous, and should ideally be represented by a great deal of makeup and preparation. It is also immune to all attempts to cause fear, either mundane or supernatural.

Rites

Since rites are the Garou's sacred ceremonies and celebrations, Uktena take great joy and pride in performing these rituals. Some rites are held to evoke a certain mood or connection among werewolves. Others ask for a specific blessing or aid from spiritual allies. Rites are important to the Uktena because they keep memories of ancestors and tradition vibrant and strong, despite the changes in the tribe through the long years. Even so-called minor rites are practiced regularly by cub and elder, for such elemental rituals are considered fundamental to building the trust necessary for strong relationships between Garou and spirit. Even common rites (such as the Moot Rite) have a "flavor" unique to the Uktena; many of those listed below are rarely shared with Wyrmcomer tribes.

Rite of Accord

Rites of Accord are specifically made for maintaining harmony and balance, concepts integral to several of the cultural traditions within the Uktena tribe. Though they are warriors to the core, Uktena do not believe in unnecessary conflict, particularly among Garou.

Rite of Balance

Level Three

The Triat is in everyone, but sometimes one aspect touches a person more strongly than another. This imbalance manifests in many ways, from a Wyld-fed madness to Wyrm-spawned depression or the joyless routine of the Weaver. Packs delving into Cyber realms for extended periods or conducting raids on Black Spiral Dancer Hives come back changed, Tainted. This rite seeks to bring them back into balance, to restore the Garou's harmony with Gaia.

System: The ritual varies depending on the relative strength of each of the Triatic influences within the subject. The ritemaster and her assistants paint glyphs and sigils of power on the subject, followed by a bath in a stream to wash away the markings (this cleansing ritual is similar to the rite Washing the Spirit, given in **Croatan Song**). Then, in a medicine lodge or other neutral place, the ritemaster conducts a series of chants and songs and drumming, using sacred herbs, bones and stones, as well as a sacred fire. At the end of the rite, the player rolls Wits + Rituals (difficulty 7, higher if the Taint is particularly strong). Three successes completely restore the balance within the subject, while fewer successes indicate partial rebalancing. In addition, the untainted subject regains a temporary Willpower point.

The rite lasts half a day and usually begins at sunrise or sunset. For particularly strong Taints, the rite may be repeated up to three more times (but must be held consecutively, with no one leaving the lodge). At the beginning of each repetition, the ritemaster must make a successful Stamina + Rituals roll (see Endurance and Rituals, below. Alternately, if you use the 1-5 Taint rating system given in the **Players Guide to the Garou**, the difficulty will be 4 + Taint level; each success decreases the Taint rating by one).

Note that when a Taint runs more deeply, performing this rite alone won't cure it. Taints bought as Merits or Flaws must be bought off with experience points, and usually require a more rigorous treatment (often a quest to a sacred place of balance). This rite treats symptoms — a Triatic Imbalance — without addressing the cause. Someone recently exposed to Wyrmish spiritual energies could be brought into balance, while a Fomori still possessed by a Bane would regain his Taint immediately.

MET: *Intermediate* Rite. In addition to the normal test required to perform a rite, at the end of the required time the Uktena must make a Mental test (retest *Rituals*) against a difficulty equal to the subject's Willpower plus three. Success means that the subject's Taint is removed, unless it is particularly potent, in which case

the Storyteller may decree that multiple consecutive uses of this rite are required to cleanse the subject entirely. Note that the same restrictions regarding particularly deeply entrenched Taints still apply — a fomori regains his Taint immediately, and this rite does not serve as a cheap way to get rid of Merits and Flaws.

Mystic Rites

Mystic Rites focus on the relationship between werewolves and spirits. They also strengthen the connection a werewolf has with the Umbra. Since the Uktena consider themselves particularly protective of the spirit world, these rites are widely used among the tribe.

Rite of the Sacred Fire

Level One

The sacred fire is a focal point of spiritual life in many septs, for like the heart of the caern it connects the physical and spirit realms — the flame burns in both. Sacred fires are tended with reverence in medicine lodges or caves, or more rarely outside — spirits are attracted to them like the proverbial moths to a flame, so such a fire would make a site pretty crowded even for an Uktena caern. Building a sacred fire in turn increases the effectiveness of other mystic endeavors.

A sacred fire is to be treated with respect. While an individual may remake sacred fires at need, it is considered more honorable to maintain one. Many septs maintain the fire for a year at a stretch, while others have kept theirs burning for years or even generations.

System: The fire is built using sanctified materials (including a small pinch of spiritually active tobacco) and started with flint sparks or with wood friction — never a lighter or match. The base of the fire consists of four logs that point in the cardinal directions. At the moment of lighting, the Garou expends a Gnosis point and makes a Wits + Rituals roll (difficulty is the local Gauntlet rating). Each additional Gnosis point spent lowers the difficulty by one. If successful, the flame ignites in the Penumbra and all Mystic Rites or other Rites dealing with spirits (such as Contrition) may be performed at -1 difficulty per two successes (after the first). At the Storyteller's option, other spirit dealings may go more smoothly, for the building of the fire indicates a respect for the old traditions and knowledge of the ancient pacts between spirit and Garou. The area covered by this rite is typically as far as the flame's heat can be felt (a medium-sized room or medicine lodge counts). The sacred fire lasts for as long as it is tended with sanctified materials.

MET: *Basic* Rite. By successfully performing this rite and spending the appropriate Gnosis, the ritemaster or any other Garou performing Mystic Rites with spirits receive a free retest on all friendly challenges.

Prayer of the Seeking

Level One

This is actually a modified (and much more complex) Prayer for the Prey, which is only taught to Uktena's children. Before a hunt for a specific item of lore or magic (such as a lost fetish or tome), the Garou prays while holding an attuned object (usually a water snake skin or, for the fortunate, an uktena scale). If successful, the Uktena finds the search much easier. If the attuned focus is lost, a new one must be found and attuned in order for the rite to work; attuned foci are personal and cannot be transferred. Smart Garou usually give some token of their gratitude for particularly successful uses of this rite.

System: Initial attunement of an ordinary focus requires the expenditure of a temporary Gnosis point; an uktena scale is already considered attuned to the owner. Before the search begins, the Garou prays to Great Uktena while holding the focus; the player makes a Wits + Rituals roll (difficulty 7, or 6 if the focus is an uktena scale). For every two successes, the player may add one die to any Enigmas, Investigation or Occult roll related to the search for the object in question. Alternately, in difficult cases the Storyteller may drop hints in the form of omens, waking visions or intuitive leaps to get the ball rolling. The object must be of lore or magical value. The bonus ends when the Garou diverts from the quest for any reason (including sleep or eating, not including fighting guards who bar the Garou's path to the goal).

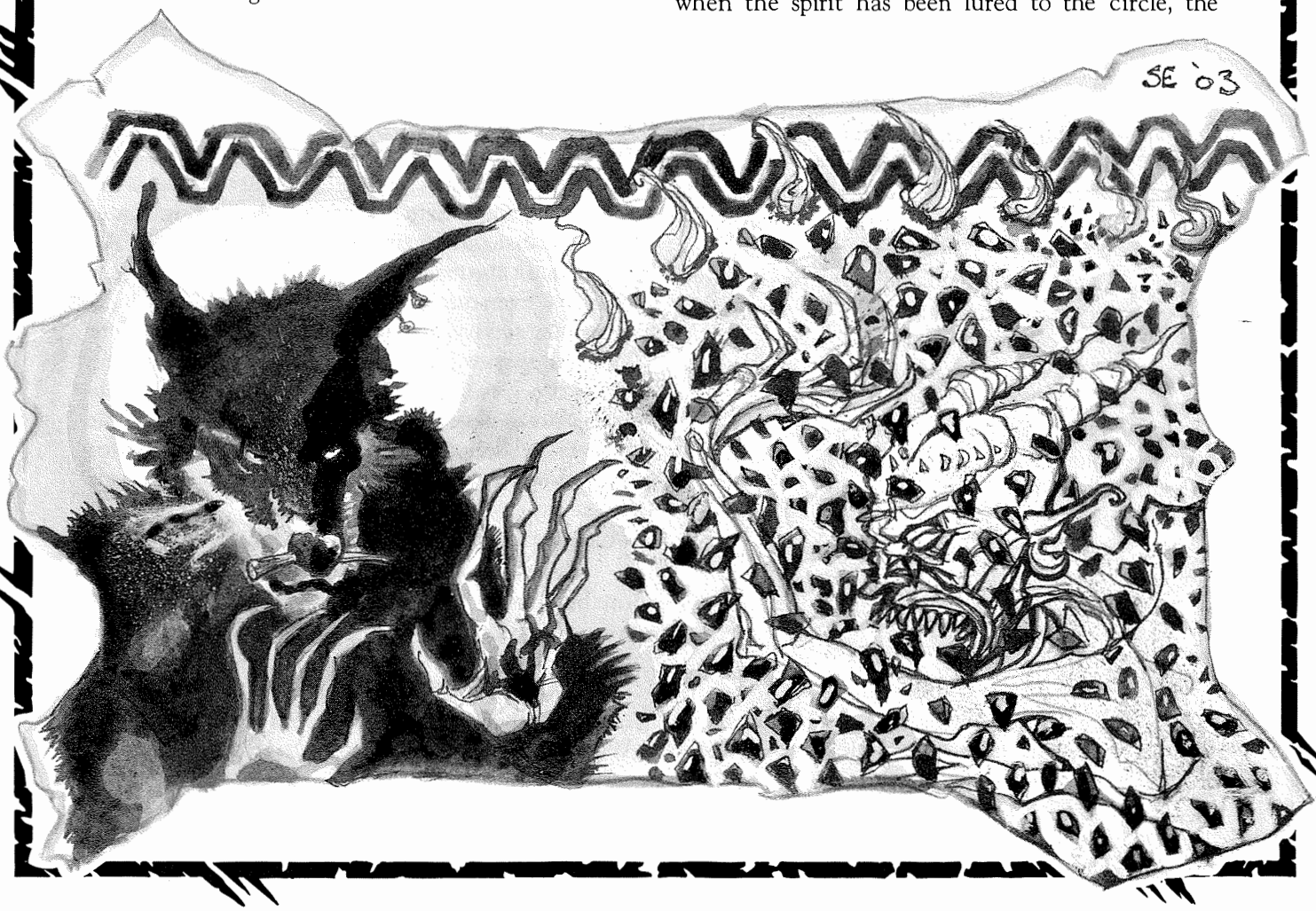
MET: *Basic* Rite. By spending a Gnosis to attune an appropriate item and making a Mental test (retest *Rituals*), the Uktena gains a number of retests equal to her Gnosis, which can be used on any *Enigmas*, *Investigation* or *Occult* tests made in search of the item she is questing after. Only one such retest may be used on a particular test, and the item must have value in regards to magic or hidden lore. This rite ends when the object is found or the Uktena diverts from the search for any reason (see above). An Uktena can only benefit from one *Prayer of Seeking* at a time.

Rite of the Spirit Cage

Level Three

The Uktena believe that killing a spirit, even a Bane, is not always the best thing to do — particularly when time is needed to question, bargain with or even bind said entity. This rite allows the Uktena to trap a spirit in a cage of energy.

System: The Uktena creates a circle (usually less than 9 feet in diameter) in the physical realm. The circle is often made of flint or obsidian chips, but sometimes of candles or burning wood. Succeeding in the Wits + Rituals roll (difficulty 7) "primes" the cage; when the spirit has been lured to the circle, the



ritemaster spends a Gnosis point to spring the trap. The Penumbral air around the spirit comes alive with spiritual representations of the circle — in the above example, that would be rapidly whirling slivers of obsidian or leaping tongues of flame. The barrier inhibits the use of most Charms.

To push through the barrier, the captive has to score more successes on a Rage roll (difficulty is the ritemaster's Wits +Rituals) than the ritemaster had. Even if it manages to push through, it suffers Aggravated damage equal to the ritemaster's successes. This works both ways. Garou cannot breach the circle without damage, although the ritemaster can drop the cage at any time.

The rite lasts an hour per success, and each additional Gnosis contributed extends the duration by an hour. However, if the circle is disturbed (a candle flickers out or the boundary is broken), the power collapses.

MET: *Intermediate* Rite. With suitable preparation and a successful activation test, the Uktena can prepare a mystic "cage" capable of trapping a spirit without harming it. The spirit must first be summoned, cajoled or otherwise lured into the area of the trap, at which time the Uktena may spend a Gnosis Trait to activate the barrier. Once trapped, a spirit cannot use any Charms across the barrier, and may only escape by defeating the ritemaster in a test of the spirit's Rage versus the ritemaster's combined Willpower + *Rituals* rating. Even if it should succeed, the spirit still suffers one level of aggravated damage per rank of the ritemaster. This damage cuts both ways, however; Garou attempting to enter the barrier receive similar damage. This rite lasts for ten minutes per level of *Rituals* the ritemaster possesses, plus an additional ten minutes for every Gnosis Trait spent during the creation of the barrier. For particularly dramatic moments, these time increments can be increased to one hour apiece with the expenditure of a Willpower Trait.

Though it can be dispelled at any time by the ritemaster, it should be noted that the rite is also ends if the circle is disturbed as described above, so great care must be taken to ensure that the boundary remains inviolate and the materials creating it undisturbed. At the Spirit Keeper's discretion, extremely powerful spirits may simply be too strong for this kind of rite to hold them, though such instances should be rare indeed or this rite becomes useless.

Rite of Invitation to the Ancestors

Level Four

Most often used in conjunction with the Spirit's Horse Gift, this rite readies a moot or council of Uktena to welcome an ancestor spirit into its midst. Usually, the werewolves sing and dance to honor the tribal ancestors. Special foods are eaten, and invocations of sacred words may be made to the sun, moon or other natural elements, depending on the cultural backgrounds of the Uktena. Some werewolves use this rite without the Gift of Spirit's Horse, to honor their ancestors and fallen heroes.

System: While no rolls are needed, some werewolves expend Gnosis as an offering to their ancestors.

Rite of Bane Binding

Level Five

One of the Uktena's most important self-appointed tasks is the capture and binding of powerful Banes that, for whatever reason, cannot be destroyed. The Uktena performing this rite consider it one of the most sacred and dangerous of all their mystical duties; they know the chances are great that many will die in completing the ritual, so it is never undertaken without serious forethought.

System: The ritemaster begins by leading participants through a ritual chant and dance intended to subdue the Bane. All the werewolves then sacrifice Gnosis (usually many points) so the ritemaster may weave a net of power to contain the Bane; if all Gnosis is expended, then Willpower and finally Stamina is spent to successfully complete the rite. The ritemaster's player then rolls Wits + Rituals, difficulty 9. For every 20 points of combined Gnosis, Willpower and Stamina spent, the difficulty drops by one, to a minimum of difficulty 7.

One success is needed to create the cage that holds the Bane; additional successes add to the strength of the Bane's confinement. Should the ritemaster's player fail the roll, the character remains alive, but the Bane is not contained, and is extremely angry. A botch indicates the immediate and messy death of the ritemaster. All players must also make a roll on their characters' current Stamina. Even one success at the same difficulty indicates they survive, but are likely exhausted. A failure means the werewolf dies from the rigors of participating in the rite. Needless to say, living or dead, participants in this rite deserve a good measure of Renown for their bravery and honor. Note that while this Rite works for many powerful Banes, the greatest spiritual evils (such as the Storm Eater) require still more powerful rites, which are specific to the individual Bane.

MET: *Advanced* Rite. This extremely dangerous rite binds a powerful Bane to a particular location. It requires at least an hour to perform, and possibly longer than that in the case of particular powerful or well-entrenched Banes (Storyteller's discretion). At the end of the rite, the assembled Garou sacrifice Gnosis Traits, Willpower Traits or Stamina-related Physical Traits to

Endurance and Rituals

Powerful rituals are both physically and mentally demanding. Rites take a great deal of focus and involve many complicated steps. Failure to follow them exactly can bring lack of success at best, catastrophe at worst. An hour of drumming, dancing and chanting can make anyone break a sweat; after a day with no break, the participants are hoarse, footsore and wobbly. Some Uktena rituals last several days.

At the end of every hour of a demanding ritual, the active participants must make a successful Stamina + Rituals roll (difficulty 3 + rite level). Even one success allows the rite to progress normally. Failing the roll results in one level of unsoakable Bashing damage from exhaustion and mental fatigue; failure also means the difficulty of the next hour's roll is raised by one. A botch makes the damage aggravated. Spending a Willpower point negates the damage, but not the difficulty increase.

Of course, werewolves have a supernatural resiliency. If the participants have any "down time" during the ritual, or if the rite is very long but not particularly strenuous, the Storyteller may switch from hourly rolls to every six, twelve or more hours.

create the mystical web used to bind the Bane, and the ritemaster makes a Mental Test (retest *Rituals*). The difficulty of this test is the Bane's Rage rating plus three, minus one Trait for every 20 Traits of Gnosis, Willpower and Stamina-related Traits spent. Success means that the Bane is imprisoned, with the strength of the confinement also roughly determined by how much energy was spent on creating the prison. Failure means that the ritemaster must make a Simple Test — if she wins or ties, the Bane is not contained and likely extremely angry, but the ritemaster survives. On a loss, however, the Bane is still free and she dies. In addition, when the rite is over the contributing Garou must each make a test of their permanent Physical Traits against a difficulty equal to the Bane's Rage rating; failure means that they die from the rigors of the rite.

Mockery Curing Way

Level Five

From time out of mind, one of the worst nightmares for a Garou was for one of her Kinfolk to be possessed by a Bane. Taint could be cleansed, but the Wyrm-spirit joined body and soul too thoroughly to extricate without destroying the host; even with a powerful healer at the ready, an exorcism frequently left the host shattered in mind and spirit. Worse still, the Bane often escaped into the Umbra to possess again another day. More often than not, Garou saw killing the victim as an agonizing but necessary task.

Recently, an Uktena pack returned from a decade-long quest with a ritual that offers a (slightly) better chance to both destroy the spirit and preserve the patient. Rather than ripping the Bane from the body, the rite drains its energy until it shrivels and pulls away like a withered creeper vine.

So far, the pack's sept has kept the Rite quiet as they perfect their practice of it. Several fomori have been cured, but many more have died; two Garou nearly died in the process. Soon, though, they will present it to the Grand Council. It is hoped that the rite will disseminate throughout the tribe, and as word spreads the Garou Nation will have a newfound respect for the dark questers of the Pure Lands.

System: The fomor is usually bound, and rendered generally powerless, but state of consciousness is irrelevant. The chants that open the rite ensure the Bane is locked within the body — for better or worse. Other werewolves may assist the ritemaster, but all must be consecrated to the purpose beforehand by undergoing a purification ritual.

The ritemaster spends a Gnosis point; the player rolls Wits + Rituals (difficulty is the Bane's Willpower), adding one die for every additional Gnosis point spent (other participants may contribute). Successes count against the Bane's Essence; when Essence reaches zero, the Bane falls into Slumber. Seen from the Umbra the shriveled Bane is draped around the victim and may be pulled off and destroyed. A new roll can be attempted every hour with an additional expenditure of Gnosis, but the ritual is exhausting for all participants (See sidebar). A very powerful Bane can take hours or even days to defeat. Unfortunately, the host may not be able to stand the strain.

The Bane fights back if it can. If it is unable to do so, it tears the victim apart, doing three levels of aggravated damage, minus successes for that hour (in other words, if the ritemaster gets two successes, the victim takes one health level of damage). On a botch, the Bane can make a break for it, doing its Rage in unsoakable aggravated damage on its way out. Damage may be healed by a Gift, assuming the healer can touch the subject.

Afterward, the ritual area and all participants are tainted by the corrupt Essence that hemorrhaged from the Bane during the rite, and all must be thoroughly cleansed through a purification ritual.

MET: *Advanced* Rite. With this potent rite, a fomori can be cleansed of the Bane that taints it, albeit at great risk to all those involved. The fomor is usually bound or otherwise rendered powerless, but it is not strictly necessary to do so (though advisable). After an hour of chanting and invocations aimed at cleansing the fomori in question, the ritemaster may spend a Gnosis Trait to attempt a Mental test (retest *Rituals*) against a difficulty equal to the Bane's combined Rage and Willpower rating plus three. The ritemaster and any other Garou involved may spend Gnosis Traits to add to the ritemaster's bid on a one-for-one basis. If the test is successful, the Bane immediately loses a number of Essence Traits equal to the ritemaster's Gnosis, plus one additional Essence Trait per Gnosis Trait that was spent to increase the ritemaster's bid. Should the Bane be completely drained of Essence, it enters Slumber and can be harmlessly removed from the host in the Umbra.

This rite is not without risk to the ritemaster or the recipient, however. While the chanting immediately keeps it locked into the host's body for the duration of the rite, the Bane attempts to lash out at anyone it can; in addition to what it might do to onlookers, it turns its anger inward out of sheer spite, inflicting three levels of aggravated damage on the host every hour. This damage cannot be prevented by armor or any other known means, though it can be healed normally provided the healer can get close enough to do so. A new test may be attempted every hour if the first is not sufficient to send the Bane into Slumber; however, remember that each hour brings more potential harm to the host. Should the ritemaster fail one of these tests, a Simple Test must be made immediately — on a win or a tie the Gnosis spent is lost for nothing, while on a loss the Gnosis is lost and the Bane immediately attempts to escape, inflicting its Rage in automatic aggravated health levels of damage on its unfortunate host. *Rituals* may be spent to re-test these Simple Tests.

Fetishes

While fetishes are relatively common, Uktena prize these items highly. Other tribes are less enthused with Uktena fetishes, for their spirits seem more sinister or demanding than most. Some of these fetishes are unusual in that no spirit is bound into them; rather, they contain a bit of Uktena's own spirit (some would say "magical essence" or medicine) to empower the fetish.

Lie Finder

Level 1, Gnosis 6

This fetish is typically made from the beard of an adult male turkey. The owner uses it by pointing to the subject (who is within speaking distance) and succeeding in a Gnosis roll. The effect lasts until the user stops pointing the fetish at a given person. If successful and the target deliberately lies, one of the bristles snaps off and falls to the ground. When the last bristle breaks off (and there may be several dozen), the spirit is freed. A spirit of truth or honesty is bound into the fetish.

MET: Once activated, this fetish requires that anyone it is directly pointed at beat the wielder in a test of their Willpower against the wielder's Gnosis; the effects become obvious if they attempt to practice deception. If the target fails, a bristle falls to the ground each time they lie. This lasts until the wielder stops pointing the fetish at them or all the bristles fall off.

Jar of Secrets

Level 1, Gnosis 5

An early version of a tape recorder, this small earthen jar stores spoken messages. By spending a Gnosis point, the user may speak into the jar for up to a minute, after which he may seal the words in with the lid. Up to five messages may be so saved. If the pot is opened without being activated, the messages are released in order from newest to oldest, and are heard at the volume with which the pot received them. Once repeated, the message is lost. If the activation roll botches, the jar shatters. Spirits of wind or echoes are bound into this fetish.

Snake Bow

Level 2, Gnosis 5

This finely crafted bow has the skin of a rattlesnake running along the back (the convex side). Any arrow loosed from the activated bow does, if any of its initial damage is unsoaked, an additional level of aggravated damage on the following turn; the wound burns as if poisoned. A rattlesnake spirit empowers this fetish.

MET: Once activated, all arrows fired from this bow deal an additional level of aggravated damage, provided they strike the target directly (i.e., damage that is not absorbed by armor or other means). Even targets normally immune to venom suffer this additional damage. The bow itself is otherwise treated as a regular bow of its type for the purposes of Bonus Traits, Negative Traits, etc.

Uktena Scale

Level 2, Gnosis 6

Those whom Uktena favors may find a reddish or whitish triangular scale (thumbnail- to palm-sized) with a razor-sharp edge — a castoff from the side of an uktena. By giving it the merest taste of his own blood (a Damageless nick) and succeeding on a Gnosis roll, the owner may make any Enigmas rolls at -2 difficulty for the

Talismans

Certain items have great spiritual significance for Uktena without being fetishes (in the sense of having spirits bound into them). Two examples are described below:

• **Medicine bag**: This is a small (usually wallet-sized or smaller) pouch often made of deerskin, but the material could be anything natural. It contains items of significance specific to the individual who made it. Usually, this will include a bit of sage and some tobacco, but the rest is strictly up to the maker. Contents can include items taken as signs from a totem, a pebble from the home place, a feather from the first kill or the bullet that had the good fortune to miss the mark. The pouch becomes a powerful talisman for the owner.

So long as he has it in his possession (either worn or carried) the owner gains a permanent point of Willpower. In addition, once per story, the owner may hold the bag and concentrate for a full turn to gain a temporary point of Willpower. Of course, there is a downside, for the psychological effect of losing the bag is tremendous. Besides the loss of the extra Willpower, the unfortunate loses another permanent Willpower until he retrieves the talisman (if the bag is destroyed, of course, the point is lost for good and must be regained through experience points and roleplaying). Anyone else who comes into possession of the bag receives a bonus of -1 difficulty to affect the owner with Gifts or rites.

Though there is no spirit bound into the bag, it does acquire a spiritual resonance over time. Players are encouraged to detail what they carry in their bag, adding to it when appropriate. The Storyteller has the option of allowing additional powers for the medicine bag (making it easier to contact totem spirits, for example).

• **Medicine bundle**: Medicine bundles are highly valued by the septs that have them. These consist of a series of items, including bags of herbs, pelts, skulls, wands, claws, crystals and other sacred objects and tools. These are then wrapped in a blanket, pelt or bag. The items are usually seen in a dream or vision and gathered together to create the bundle in a ritual. While the bundles are considered spiritually alive and not owned by anyone, a keeper is given the honor of caring for the bundle.

Medicine bundles have several qualities. First, holding the bundle makes dealings with Gaian spirits easier (-1 difficulty to Gnosis or Social rolls). Furthermore, each bundle is dedicated to a certain purpose. For example, bundles may aid in healing (giving a bonus to all healing-related rolls), protection (improving the bearer's luck) or Umbral travel (providing a bonus to Enigmas rolls dealing with following the proper path or staying oriented). However, most medicine bundles are designed to improve success with a specific ritual or category of ritual. While not a receptacle for a bound spirit, they do become spiritually active, and are thus treated with great respect. They tend to become more powerful with age if treated properly. Losing one leaves a great black mark on one's reputation.

remainder of the scene. In addition, feeding the scale allows the bearer to shift (even partially shift) at -1 difficulty for one turn per success on the activation roll. When activated, it shimmers and sparkles like fire.

Because finding one is never considered happenstance (and no Uktena in her right mind would challenge for the scale), the Uktena is marked as watched by the totem spirit, receiving a temporary point of Honor. Those who betray that favor suffer in tragic but intriguing ways. Once the owner dies, the scale loses the above abilities. However, it may be used for a different purpose by anyone who knows the proper ritual. The new owner must take splinters from a lightning-struck tree, light it from a natural source (including flint or friction but not matches or a lighter) and burn the scale. Wrapping remaining coal (which is gray or black and always has a reddish glow in the center) in a piece of deerskin grants the bearer +1 per two successes on a Gnosis roll on any hunting or tracking roll. The effects last for a scene. However, the fetish must be hung outside in the woods when not in use, for its energies poison those unlucky enough to be indoors in its presence (one level of Aggravated damage per hour for being in the same room, per two hours in an adjacent room).

Flint Arrow Shirt

Level 2, Gnosis 7

This armor shirt is made from a hundred or more stone arrow and spear heads, held together by sinew and plaited hair. When active, it allows the wearer an additional soak die per success for one scene (including silver). In addition, activation causes a layer of clear ice to form around the flint, offering similar protection from the effects of fire and intense heat. A flint spirit and an ice spirit are both required to empower this fetish.

Moon Bow

Level 3, Gnosis 7

A Moon Bow appears as a short or longbow of dark wood, with glyphs for each of the moon phases carved on it. The bow shoots more accurately in the light of the moon, even when the moon appears during the day. To attune the bow initially, the Garou must fire an arrow at the moon, spend a point of Gnosis and succeed in a Gnosis roll (difficulty 7). If successful, the bow is attuned to her until she gives it away. When shooting in the moon's light, she makes another Gnosis check (difficulty depends on the moon's phase; use Rage roll difficulties, i.e., 8 for new moon, 4 for full); every two successes add an extra die to the attack roll for that shot. A Lune or other moon spirit empowers the bow.

MET: To attune this fetish, the Garou must fire an arrow at the moon, spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Gnosis test against a difficulty of five. If successful, the bow is attuned to her until given away. When fired in the moon's light, the wielder gains a number of additional Bonus Traits depending on the phase of the moon, from one Trait during the new moon all the way up to five Traits during the full. These Bonus Traits stack with the ordinary Bonus Traits gained from the bow.

Spirit Dagger

Level 4, Gnosis 7

This blade has several important properties. The bite of this obsidian blade is grievously painful to spirits (including all manner of Banes), adding two levels (not dice) of damage to any successful attack. But more impressively, the dagger can pierce the Gauntlet. By spending a Willpower point and making a successful Gnosis roll (difficulty is the Gauntlet rating), the wielder may make a single attack into the Penumbra. Note that unless the Garou has some way of seeing exactly where the spirit is, she is subject to the penalties for fighting blind. There are two downsides to this weapon. While the blade is practically unbreakable when striking spirits (including materialized spirits but not fomori), it reacts like volcanic glass when striking anything physical (i.e., it's liable to shatter when striking bone, wood, metal or almost anything harder than flesh). Also, spirits can sense the blade's presence and react unfavorably to the bearer. Heron spirits are typically used to make a spirit dagger.

MET: This dagger deals two additional levels of damage when wielded against spirits, and by spending a Willpower Trait, the wielder can make a single attack across the Gauntlet (subject to normal blind-fighting penalties unless she can see her target). However, used against physical targets, the blade deals normal damage, and the wielder must win a Simple Test every time it is used or it shatters immediately. Additionally, most spirits can sense this fetish's presence and react to those carrying it with distrust, putting them down one Trait on all Social tests with spirits.

Bane Seal

Level 5, Gnosis 7

The prisons that trap the Great Banes cannot contain their evil forever. The bindings weaken and fade unless a Bane Tender is standing guard. But there have always been too few Tenders, and even they must sleep or periodically find refuge from the Tainted energies lest they weaken and fall. The Bane Seal acts as the lock on the spiritual prison, giving the guardians an extra measure of security.

This fetish varies in appearance. Some are simply slabs of rock carved with runes; others take the form of elaborate sand paintings. A powerful Weaver spirit is bound to the fetish. Although it rarely enters willingly, it can't go against its nature and is soon hard at work keeping the energy strands of the Bane prison ordered and strong. The Seal is set in an important location close to the Bane (usually on the ground above its resting place or at the mouth of the cave which traps it). Upon activation, the Seal must be fed Gnosis to sustain the spirit's strength — depending on the Bane's strength, it may require 5 Gnosis per month or even more (alternately, the Storyteller may rule that the Seal requires one Gnosis for every success scored in the initial binding). If not fed the proper amount, the strands of the prison begin to weaken until they fail. Some Garou bind spirits that can siphon spiritual energy directly from a caern (or a network of caerns), further safeguarding the Bane prison. Small wonder, then that the disruption caused by invasion or destruction of caerns resulted in the release of many great evils.

Ulunsuti

Level 6, Gnosis 9

The Ulunsuti is a rare, if not unique, object, for in order to get it, one of Great Uktena's most powerful children must die. On the forehead of an uktena is a clear crystal, large as a dinner plate and hard as diamond, with a blood-red streak running through the center from the top to the bottom.

The powers ascribed to this stone are many, but chief among them is the ability to prophesy, seeing images of the future in the crystal "as a tree is reflected in the quiet stream." In addition, the owner is said to be able to see anywhere he can name, and even cast his eye into the distant past. He is also gifted with luck in his endeavors, so long as the stone's hunger is sated.

But as with all such power, there is a price to wield it. The Ulunsuti must be given blood every seven days (half a pint — the blood of a small animal will do), which soaks into the stone and makes the streak shimmer. Twice a year, it must drink the blood of a large animal, such as a deer. Some wise men warn that the stone must never be given more than a little human or Garou blood, for it will learn to crave only that and accept no other kind. Since no one currently admits to having an ulunsuti, there is no way to confirm this.

If the stone isn't fed properly, it flies through the air at night and drinks its fill from the owner or his people. In addition, it is rumored to allow only its owner to touch it, attacking anyone else who ventures within reach. When not in use it must be wrapped in a whole deerskin placed in an earthen pot and hidden in a dark place (a cave is preferable). If the owner intends to store it away for a long time, he must tell the stone he won't need it for a long time, and (hopefully) it will go to sleep; it must be fed before he again tries to use it, or it will drain his blood.

When the owner dies, the stone must be placed upon his chest; otherwise the Ulunsuti hunts for him every night (presumably feeding as it does so) for seven years before going into Slumber. In either case, after seven years it may be awakened. If the Garou feeds it blood and successfully attunes it, he becomes the new owner (if the Garou fails, the awakened crystal goes back to sleep beside his bloodless corpse).

Talens

Uktena typically have talens from their specific cultural heritage. For example, an Hawai'ian Uktena may have a lei talen, whereas an Uktena of African ancestry may possess a talen in the form of a colorful sash of cloth or a piece of jewelry.

Sun Arrow

Gnosis 6

This arrow has sun designs along the shaft and sometimes the fletching as well. When loosed, this arrow flares with the light of the sun, blinding enemies and searing vampires within 20 feet of its path. Even at greater distances, Leeches fear its light, which is why some werewolves use the arrows as signal flares. After it strikes home, the arrow continues to burn for a number of rounds equal to the successes on the archer's Gnosis roll, doing two levels of aggravated damage (those who can soak fire damage do so at a difficulty of 9). After the final round, the arrow is consumed to ash. One of the brood of Helios must be bound into this talen.

MET: A sun arrow illuminates the area as brightly as daylight, and provokes frenzy tests in any vampires or other light-sensitive creatures nearby. Only those directly struck by it suffer any actual damage, however. The arrow deals aggravated fire damage, and continues to burn after it strikes, dealing one level of aggravated damage to the target each turn afterward. This lasts until the target takes an action to remove it or three turns have passed, and the fire cannot be quenched by water or other conventional means.

Vision Paint

Gnosis 5

Priests in Mesoamerica used a black paste similar to this to bring visions and to inspire fear. Though fairly rare (the mixture of crushed and burned poisonous insects and plants is tricky to reproduce), jars of Vision Paint still find their way into Uktena septs throughout the world. When rubbed all over the body, this ointment boosts Stamina by one for every two successes on a Gnosis roll, up to double the normal Stamina. At the Storyteller's option, it may also increase the chances for a vision. The effects last for six hours, plus one hour per dot of Stamina in the improved total. One the effects wear off, both Stamina and Strength are at -2 for the same number of hours. Because the talen requires total skin contact, it is only effective in Homid and Glabro forms.

MET: Those wearing vision paint receive the free Physical Trait: *Tough*, as well as a free retest on all *Enigmas*, *Meditation* or *Occult* tests related to receiving or deciphering visions while the paint is active. Vision paint lasts for the remainder of the scene, and for the scene afterward the wearer is two Traits down due to dizziness and exhaustion.

Totems

As stated previously, Uktena enlist the patronage of totem spirits almost as a matter of course . Given the tribe's respect and understanding of spirit ways, many totems are glad to lend them power and instruction. Below are just a few additional totems available to Uktena characters.

Totem of Respect

These spirits deal with concepts such as honor, diplomacy and sage advice. Many Uktena of great renown have chosen totems of respect for their packs.

Wild Turkey

Background Cost: 5

Roaming Turtle Island from the woods and swamps of the southeast to the hills of the northwest, wild turkeys are known for their keen eyesight and ability to blend in with their surroundings. These birds are wary

and watchful, and quite intelligent when compared to their doltish domestic cousins. Wild Turkey is a proud totem, honorable and alert for danger. Packs dedicated to Wild Turkey make exceptional sentries, and thus are favored as scouts and guardians.

Traits: Wild Turkey grants his packs +2 Perception (with the exception of smell rolls) and the Gift: Blending. Packs also gain an additional die when trying to impress or intimidate.

Ban: Wild Turkey is outraged at the depth of sheer stupidity his domestic relations have sunk to. Pack members must never use or consume any product from domestic turkeys (this is trickier than it sounds).

MET: Turkey's packs gain the *Discerning* and *Alert* Traits, as well as the *Blending* Gift. They are one Trait up on all Social tests to impress or intimidate opponents.

Totems of War

War totems, as may be expected, embody a passion for battle and predation. They often bestow blessings related to valor, tactics and Rage. Uktena warriors have a reputation for coolness under fire, and this iron determination is often the boon of a totem of war to a loyal follower.

Gila Monster

Background Cost: 7

Though sluggish and hard to rouse, when finally angered this desert dwelling lizard clamps down with a death grip to let its poisonous saliva work into the wound. Packs dedicated to Gila are likewise slow to act but tenacious in a fight.

Traits: Packs receive the Gifts: Venom and Implacable Grip.

Ban: Gila's torpid nature rubs off on his packs. They receive a -1 penalty on Initiative rolls; in cold conditions the penalty is -2.

MET: Gila's favored children gain the listed Gifts, but are considered to have one less Trait than they actually possess for purposes of determining the order of actions in a turn. In cold conditions, this increases to two Traits lower than normal. It does not affect their actual Trait totals for the purposes of resolving ties or overbids.

Hummingbird

Background Cost: 6

In some ways the opposite of Gila Monster, Hummingbird embodies swiftness and precision. He can fly in all directions or hover. But he can't stay still long, for his speed comes at a price — a hunger that cannot be denied.

Traits: Hummingbird favors his packs with the Gift: Spirit of the Fray. Furthermore, he grants each pack member an additional two dots of Dexterity. While in the Umbra, each pack member can hover or fly up to their lupus running speed, though without obvious wings.

Ban: Hummingbird has a voracious appetite, and demands that his packs supply him with a point of Gnosis *per day*.

MET: In addition to the listed Gift, followers of Hummingbird gain *Quick* and *Energetic* Physical Traits, and can hover or fly in the Umbra.

Totem of Wisdom

Totems of wisdom reward their followers with knowledge of hidden places and things. This, of course, makes them natural allies of the Uktena.

Dragonfly

Background Cost: 3

Dragonfly is ever watchful for prey or threats, but her stillness explodes into swift actions as she pounces. Though not a common pack totem, she is respected by many Garou as a fearsome pond predator.

Traits: Dragonfly's packs receive two extra dots in Alertness and an additional dot of Brawl.

Ban: Dragonfly asks her children to show patience and deliberation, but to act swiftly and decisively when a decision is reached. She also asks that the pack do whatever it can to protect dragonflies (frequently, this means halting insecticide use in a given locality, whether a farmer's crop-dusting or a city's mosquito-spraying regime).

MET: Dragonfly's packs gain *Alert* x2 and a free level of *Brawl*.

Totem of Cunning

Totems of Cunning generally promote stealth, trickery and deception. Many tribes instinctively distrust these spirits, but the Uktena have great respect for their wiles and often take them as pack or sept totems.

Roadrunner

Background Cost: 3

Relying more on fast footwork than wings for escape, Roadrunner symbolizes both an agile body and equally agile mind. Packs who follow Roadrunner are known for quick thinking and mental flexibility.

Traits: Roadrunner grants her packs an additional dot in Intelligence, as well as an additional dot in Enigmas.

Ban: Roadrunner's packs may not hunt roadrunners, and they must do what they can to protect desert lands from destruction and defilement.

MET: Roadrunner's children gain the *Knowledgeable* Trait, as well as a free level of *Enigmas*.

Spirit Allies

Spirit allies are a vital part of the Uktena tribe. The Gift Spirit Speech is widely known, and Uktena consider talking to spirits with respect and deference part of their regular duties as Garou.

Animal Fathers

Attributes vary, usually one higher than their lesser kin. For example, the Animal Father of Deer (listed in **Werewolf: The Apocalypse**) would have Willpower 5, Rage 5, Gnosis 7, Essence 17.

Charms: Airt Sense, Materialize, Peek, Realm Sense (centered around members of own species), Reform, others appropriate to species.

Image: Animal Fathers generally appear as larger, nobler, idealized versions of their species. Alternately, one may appear more innocuous if it suits its purpose.

History: Each species has an Animal Father, known by some cultures as "Lord of the Eagles," "King of Deer," and so on, watch over and influence those they represent. They know where all their kind are, how they live and how they die. Animal Fathers representing prey species are especially concerned with their fates, marking how hunters kill them. What a squirrel knows, the Animal Father of Squirrels knows. Wendigo and Uktena are careful to appease the spirit Fathers of prey every season in order to keep game plentiful, and to make special sacrifices or quests during lean times when food is scarce. Garou who act *exceedingly* honorably — always making quick, clean kills, never failing to perform a Prayer for the Prey — never fail to scent prey. Conversely, Garou who "play with their food" or frequently kill more than is needed may find themselves unable to locate game. Septs who don't take care of local game (conserving prey and thanking the animal spirits) find that no more deer and rabbits are born in their territory; such is the retribution of the Fathers.

Habitat: Each Father is said to have a lodge in the Near Umbra from which to watch his kind. It may also wander in a spiritual locale that would suit its physical counterpart.

Spiritual Correspondences: What the spirit may represent depends on the species. However, these watchers also represent the consequences of abusing nature's bounty.

Material Correspondences: Food for or relics (bone, hair, etc) of the species in question; tobacco.

Gift **Lore**: Animal Fathers teach any Gift taught by their lesser kin (Rabbit teaches Hare's Leap, for example). Any Animal Father can teach the Minor Rite Prayer for the Prey, asking nothing save that the student practice it regularly. The Fathers also have the power to

summon their children, or to increase or decrease the fruitfulness of their children in a given area.

Taboos: To the disrespectful, teach nothing except perhaps a painful or humiliating lesson.

Attitude: Generally aloof; respectful of those deserving of it, disdain or anger for the cruel or the game-waster.

Chiminage: One must always treat any Animal Father with great respect. Except the rite mentioned above, the spirit does no favors to those who mistreat or disregard the Father's children. For favors granted, they usually request that the pack avoid killing that species for a moon or more. The creation or maintenance of prime habitat also pleases them.

Lesser Uktena

Willpower 7, Rage 9, Gnosis 10, Essence 26

Charms: Airt Sense, Materialize, Reform, Armor, Peek, Blast (Heat), Suggestion

Image: An uktena appears as a stocky serpent with antlers growing on its triangular head. A large clear crystal or gemstone, the ulunsuti, shines on its forehead like a diamond. Its color can range from nearly black to white, but dark reddish hues are more common. In addition, it has a series of spots or bands running down its body. The spirit listed here is roughly 25 feet long and five feet wide. These statistics are for the more common uktena. Many in Galunlati are over 300 feet long (with correspondingly greater Attributes), and Great Uktena is as big as he cares to be.

History: Humans have long feared the great horned serpents, uktena being but one of their names. They were said to lure their prey (whether deer or bird or man) by mimicking cries of loved ones, and, when they were in sight, mesmerizing them with the dazzling light from the crystal on their forehead. Some said the hate in their eyes could strike a man dead, or worse, curse his family with death. Even their blood could kill with a touch.

The greatest of the uktenas left the world for Galunlati in the days before the Intruders, but the radical changes in the world have begun to pique their curiosity. Of course, the inquisitive nature of an uktena spirit can bring dire consequences. A rumor circulates among the tribe (though never spoken in the presence of outsiders) that an uktena was drawn to the Trinity site out of curiosity; when the first nuclear bomb was detonated the spirit was corrupted and mutated, becoming the first Thunderwyrm.

Habitat: Most Uktena (and nearly all of the largest specimens) reside in the realm of Galunlati. Those in the Penumbra are attracted to water, as well as nearby high places where they bask and hunt.

Spiritual Correspondences: Knowledge, stealth, secrets

Material Correspondences: Fresh water, snakeskins, crystals (esp. clear or reddish jewels) and uktena scales. Puzzles or strange devices may also be used as lures.

Gift **Lore**: Uktena teach Gifts pertaining to concealment, stealth, water, hidden and dangerous lore, and basic deception Gifts such as Mimicry.

Taboos: An uktena may be quickly killed by piercing its heart, which lies behind the seventh spot/band from the head (although it looks no different and for system purposes, Armor won't cover that area). This fact is known by very few; pointing out that you know this can get its undivided attention, but may well provoke an attack. Uktena dislike great birds of prey such as Thunderbird.

Attitude: To happen upon an uktena, especially when it is resting or hunting, is to find a hostile spirit. A safer way of dealing with one is to engage its curiosity with strange puzzles or by singing elaborate riddles. If an uktena wishes one to find it, it may leave clues that it expects to be followed... but the searcher can never be sure the clues were intentional, nor whether the uktena seeks to grant knowledge or have a snack.

Chiminage: Uktena like to hear newly uncovered knowledge. Distributing gifts of Gnosis or information before asking for anything is a good idea. For larger requests, they may demand onerous quests, such as recovering a fetish or book from the Abyss.

Turkey Gaffling

Willpower 4, Rage 5, Gnosis 6, Essence 16

Charms: Airt Sense, Armor, Materialize, Peek

Image: Although turkey spirits sometimes take the form of a hen, they usually appear as a fine specimen of a large gobbler, with a great fan of tail feathers, long "beard" growing from its chest and long sharp spurs on its legs.

History: Turkeys were hunted in the Americas from time out of mind. Turkey spirits watched to make sure their physical brethren were properly thanked for their lives. Some saw the strutting male as a totem of war, with its long scalp lock beard and its scalped head. Though that isn't the case for Turkey spirits, they will scrap if offended.

Habitat: Turkey Gafflings can often be found in Umbral Glades and Penumbral woodlands and hills corresponding to the favored habitat of their earthbound counterparts.

Spiritual Correspondences: Turkey Gafflings embody alertness, stealth and survival.

Material Correspondences: A turkey feather (or some other body part) is usually required when summoning this bird spirit, but for the greatest success, the summoner should take the time to call the bird spirit. A turkey call is available at any sporting goods store, although handmade is better. Hen calls are enticing, while gobbler calls imply challenge; either may work. Dawn is the preferred time to summon a Turkey Gaffling.

Gift Lore: Turkey Gafflings teach Gifts related to stealth, survival, visual perception, and gifts dealing with impressing or intimidating others, such as the Gift: Strut.

Taboos: A Turkey spirit demands respect from those who seek his aid. A Garou that doesn't regularly practice the Prayer for the Prey has little hope of successfully bargaining with this spirit.

Attitude: This sharp-eyed spirit is wary of Garou, but anyone that takes the time and effort to call him in (and do it well) has earned his attention and a measure of favor. Still, he takes his time before agreeing to any request that isn't obviously in his best interest (such as entering a fetish). A Turkey Gaffling tends to trust Uktena and Wendigo more than other tribes, though he may deal with any tribe. A poorly handled encounter results in a frightened Turkey flying away or an insulted bird spurring and beating the hapless werewolf.

Chiminage: A proper balance between respect and pride keeps a Turkey Gaffling's attention. Gifts of corn or acorns are also appreciated. The spirit seldom asks for more than the protection of some good habitat or for the Garou to refrain from killing or eating his earthbound kind for a season.

Caerns and Septs of Note

Uktena strongholds range from across the southeastern United States, including the southern Atlantic coast, the southern Appalachians and around the Gulf of Mexico; across Texas and past the border with Mexico; and into the desert southwest. Other notable Uktena septs also exist in Hawai'i, Australia and New Zealand, and rumors abound of forgotten septs in South America. Since Russia is now more accessible, Uktena of North America have also re-forged ties with old septs in Siberia. The following is a short list of Uktena caerns of note.

Sept of the Waking Dream, Australia

Located in the heart of Australia and the Outback, the Sept of the Waking Dream was first established in the nineteenth century. It is an exclusive group, comprised only of Uktena descended from aborigines, and their caern is one of Enigmas, devoted to Uktena himself. The sept members devote much of their time to studying the loss of the Bunyip and ways they might be restored.

Caern: Level 4

Gauntlet: 3

Sept of the Spirit Stone, Siberia

On the harsh Siberian taiga, nestled in a Yakut village, is another sept whose totem is Uktena. The members of the Sept of the Spirit Stone are almost exclusively Uktena, though they do welcome Stargazers from time to time. The caern itself is located on the site of the 1908 Tunguska explosion, and what these Uktena keep *very* quiet is what rests beneath the caern: the Zmei called Trevero. Recent events in Russia have prompted these secretive Uktena to grudgingly take a greater interest in the affairs of all Garou in the region.

Caern: Level 3

Gauntlet: 3

Sept of the Glass Hand, Bryson City

Currently an offshoot of the larger and more powerful Sept of the Seven Clans located on the nearby Cherokee reservation, the Glass Hand Sept has a strange history. In prehistoric times, the Croatan called this caern of Enigmas home. When the tribe sacrificed itself, the local Uktena spread into the region and claimed the caern before it could fade away. The caern's name comes from the beautiful arcing waterfall near the heart of the bawn; in winter, the falls freeze, appearing almost like five fingers of ice hovering over the rocks below. The Uktena honored the totem, Fog, and kept the caern secure until being overwhelmed by Black Spiral Dancers in the late 1950s. For nearly a decade the Wyrm-tainted Garou defiled the caern, searching in vain for a great Wyrm fetish that was rumored to exist within its bawn. In the mid 1960s, three packs of Uktena laid siege to the Black Spirals, raiding the enemy and slowly bleeding away their strength until finally crushing their foes and restoring the caern.

But as the years passed, the Garou presence weakened at the caern. Frequent battles left many casualties and no replacements. Around 1975, some young Shadow Lords offered to help in the caern's defense, leaving the beleaguered defenders little choice but to accept aid. Only a few Uktena remained in the sept; others joined their old brethren at the Sept of Seven Clans.

Still, all was not well at the caern. Some Shadow Lords believed that the Uktena had left some of their dark magic to taint the caern, and they were wary... though not cautious enough. About two years ago, two packs of Black Spiral Dancers attacked the caern, slaughtering the

sept in a hard-fought battle. All that remained of the Shadow Lords were a few maimed Kinfolk and a couple of untried cubs. Desperate, these youngsters decided to seek outside help before the Spirals raided the caern again. Within a few days, two packs of Uktena from the Sept of the Seven Clans were on the scene, effectively taking over the sept for the second time.

Caern: Level 3

Gauntlet: 3

The Roadrunner Sept, Arizona

The Roadrunner Sept guards an ancient caern of Wits, and the sept members honor their totem by using its name as their own. The sept consists of several packs and totals about 50 members. It is based south of the Cow Springs rock formation, not too far from Zihi-Dush-Jhini Peak, in meandering lands that touch both the Navajo and Hopi reservations. While almost exclusively Uktena, the sept had a decent relationship with the nearby Wendigo Sept of the Painted Sands, until that sept fell recently to attacking forces of the Wyrm. Now about a third of the Roadrunner Sept has traveled to the Painted Sands caern to guard it against further incursions. Most members of the Roadrunner Sept devote themselves to studying, interestingly enough, Aztec culture and artifacts. Many have Kin nearby who are farmers or ranchers.

Caern: Level 4

Gauntlet: 3

Making it Scary

This is especially for Storytellers, although players might enjoy working some spooky elements into their character backgrounds, too. These are just a few ideas for increasing the panic and fear factor in your Uktena setting.

Anxiety: As individual stories are woven into the full-fledged chronicle, more and more events should carry a hint of doom. Escapes become narrower; the enemy gets stronger and uses the characters' weaknesses against them. The bottom line is that the players should be biting their nails and on the edge of their seats each time the Storyteller begins the session.

Dark Secrets: Lost tomes of Wyrm cults, ancient and powerful artifacts, fetishes made by Gaia-knows-what kind of creatures — these are all examples of the enigmas Uktena simply can't resist. Tossing these into the chronicle is sure to arouse the characters' interest... and pull them into danger.

Suspense: Successful Storytelling with the Uktena must involve building some level of apprehension. A wise Storyteller paces the elements of the mystery with care, giving enough tidbits away to keep the players interested, but not revealing the whole picture until the time is right. Expectations should build gradually, and then come crashing down on the characters' heads.

Temptation: Even the noblest werewolf can fall victim to temptation, and the Uktena are far from exceptional in this regard. Who among them wouldn't be enticed by a powerful talen of unknown origins? Wouldn't a canny Crescent Moon *want* to know what the defeated witch had in his medicine bag? The potential risks shouldn't matter; the thirst for knowledge is too great to resist.

Good Resources

The following books are good resources by both native peoples and cultural outsiders that offer unique perspectives and detailed insights. Hopefully, they'll provide some interesting parallels to Uktena society.

- *A Forest of Time* by Peter Nabokov. Nabokov analyzes the relationship of history, myth and cultural identity in the stories, religion and folklore of the American Indian. A useful work for building a context of oral rather than literary culture.
- *From a Native Daughter* by Haunani-Kay Trask. Trask, a professor at the University of Hawai'i, writes provocative essays in this book, filled with a righteous anger. She's a leader in the Hawai'ian sovereignty movement, and her writing chronicles her experiences against colonialism in her home.
- *Non-Western Educational Traditions* by Timothy Reagan. A well-written perspective on how cultures such as American Indians and traditional African peoples learn from elders and through teaching tools such as games and oral traditions. This book has some wonderful inspiration for how werewolves might educate new tribe members and design a Rite of Passage.
- *Borderlands: La Frontera, the New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa. Weaving her words in English and Spanish, among narrative and poetry, Anzaldúa talks about living, working and dwelling in two cultures, on both physical and spiritual planes. This work is both history and reflection on existence in dual worlds.
- *Encyclopedia of Native American Religions* by Arlene Hirschfelder and Paulette Molin. This volume contains over 1,200 entries for ceremonies, religious movements, court cases, prophets and shamans, and important places and events.
- *Atlas of the North American Indian* by Carl Waldman. A comprehensive work that manages to cram 40,000 years of North and Mesoamerican history into less than 400 pages (granted, the majority of the work is for the historical period). A very worthwhile volume.

• *The Southeastern Indians* by Charles Hudson. This text covers culture, beliefs and history of the one of the richest Native American cultures north of Mesoamerica.

• *Darkthunder's Way* by Tom Deitz. This fantasy novel, one in a series, gives a modern take on the mythical uktena monster and how it interacts with other mystical forces.

• *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees* by James Mooney. It's over 100 years old, but this book remains one of the most thorough ethnologies of the Cherokee in North Carolina.

• *American Indian Myths and Legends* edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz. One hundred and sixty tales are divided up by topic, from the creation to the end of the world. This volume is especially useful for Songkeepers and Tricksters.

• Anything by Sherman Alexie, including the film *Smoke Signals* and the books *Reservation Blues* and *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven.* Alexie has a keen wit and the ability to stir both anger and amusement in his readers when discussing the various stereotypes of Indians and outsiders. His works are lyrical and mystical, with a knack for making you engage in some deep thinking.

• The works, both fiction and nonfiction, by Tony Hillerman. The Chee/Leaphorn mysteries are useful both for mood and inspiration, since knowledge of Hopi and Navajo spirituality is as essential as keen deductive reasoning to solving a case. This series helps to make the basic mindset of these two desert tribes more accessible to non-Indians.

• The short stories of Manly Wade Wellman: Most gamers know H.P. Lovecraft, but the works of Wellman may be less familiar. His writing has a keen edge, as the characters are everyday people with extraordinary wisdom. Set in the backcountry of the Appalachians, Wellman's tales provide lots of ideas for things werewolves weren't meant to know.

Chapter Four: From Bottomless Pools

Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And when you look long into the abyss, the abyss also looks into you.
— Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

Even while they pursue mysteries and secrets, the Uktena are in many ways a conundrum unto themselves. Since they can't resist seeking out lost lore and dark secrets, many members of the tribe dance along a dangerous edge over an abyss. On one side is the power that knowledge of things hidden and foul can provide; on the other is the seductive lure of such secrets. Many Uktena find themselves overwhelmed and tormented by the very wisdom they wish to use only for the good of the Garou Nation. Their fall into the abyss is headlong and unchecked.

To outsiders, and Wyrmcomers in particular, the Uktena seem close-mouthed, secretive and perhaps a bit sinister. For the vast majority of Uktena, nothing could be further from the truth. They don't talk openly about what they know for many reasons, chief among them fear of what would happen to outsiders who'd have no clue about what they might be confronting. Uktena also see some Wyrmcomers as weak in spirit; they'd be unable to resist the temptation of power from dark places. Finally, certain Uktena believe that they alone have been chosen by Gaia and their own totem to be the keepers of secrets and dangerous lore.

Integrated Healer

Quote: *I don't care if it sounds "too granola;" if you do what I say, you'll feel better.*

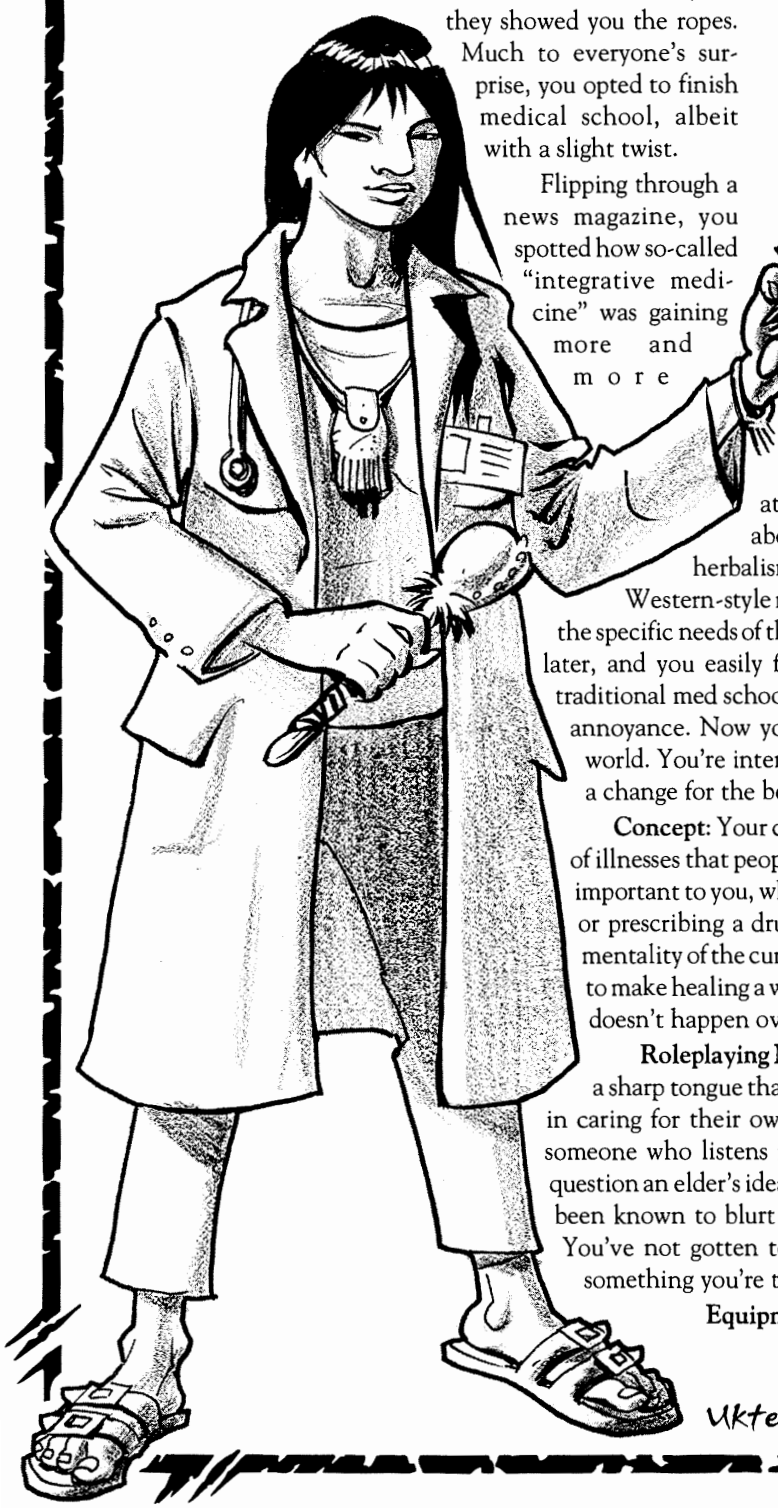
Prelude: You grew up one generation off the reservation, born to Kinfolk parents who probably knew something about werewolves, but didn't ever mention it to you. They seemed somewhat desperate to just "fit in" as suburban, middle class drones. Cashing in on the government's scholarship fund for minorities, your wits got you through college and into a decent med school. Just after your first year, the First Change hit you hard, scrambling your world like eggs in a blender. Fortunately, you met up with a mixed pack that included some urban Uktena, and they showed you the ropes. Much to everyone's surprise, you opted to finish medical school, albeit with a slight twist.

Flipping through a news magazine, you spotted how so-called "integrative medicine" was gaining more and more attention. People from all walks of life were spreading the word about how Eastern-style medicine, chiropractic, osteopathy, herbalism and a lot of related stuff were proving to be as helpful as Western-style medicine. And combining the two approaches with an eye to the specific needs of the sick and injured was more powerful still. A few phone calls later, and you easily found your way into a start-up program where, unlike in traditional med school, your provocative questions were considered a gift, not an annoyance. Now you're ready to take what you've learned back out into the world. You're interested in serving the werewolves, but also in trying to make a change for the better among your human and wolf Kin as well.

Concept: Your core belief is that no single approach can cover the vast array of illnesses that people suffer. Tailoring the treatment to the patient is extremely important to you, whether it's using aromatherapy, calling for a spiritual blessing or prescribing a drug. One thing that makes you crazy is the "drive through" mentality of the current health system. You'd like to use your influence and skills to make healing a work of harmony that repairs mind, spirit *and* body, and it sure doesn't happen overnight.

Roleplaying Notes: While gentle and teasing with children, you also have a sharp tongue that can spur adults into action when they've been complacent in caring for their own health. Among the werewolves, you're getting a rep as someone who listens respectfully, but also isn't afraid to express an opinion or question an elder's ideas, if they seem flawed. Usually, you keep it polite, but you've been known to blurt out what you're really thinking, instead of keeping quiet. You've not gotten too many scars from this attitude, fortunately. Patience is something you're trying hard to cultivate.

Equipment: Healing bag, herbs, pocket-sized reference books



Uktena

UKTENA™

Name:	Breed: **Homid**	Pack Name:
Player:	Auspice: **Ragabash**	Pack Totem:
Chronicle:	Camp:	Concept: **Integrated Healer**

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●○○○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●○○○	Intelligence	●●●●○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●●○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Animal Ken	○○○○○	Computer	●○○○○
Athletics	●●○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●●○○○
Brawl	●○○○○	Drive	●○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Etiquette	●○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	●●●○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	●○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Primal-Urge	●●○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Politics	●○○○○
Streetwise	●○○○○	Stealth	●○○○○	Rituals	●○○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○	Survival	●○○○○	Science	●●●○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Allies	●○○○○	Persuasion	
Conta	●○○○○	Blur of the Milky Eye	
Kinfo	●○○○○	Sense Magic	
Res	●●○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory ○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□

Honor ○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□

Wisdom ○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□

Rank 1

Rage ●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Gnosis ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower ●●●●●●○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised		□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

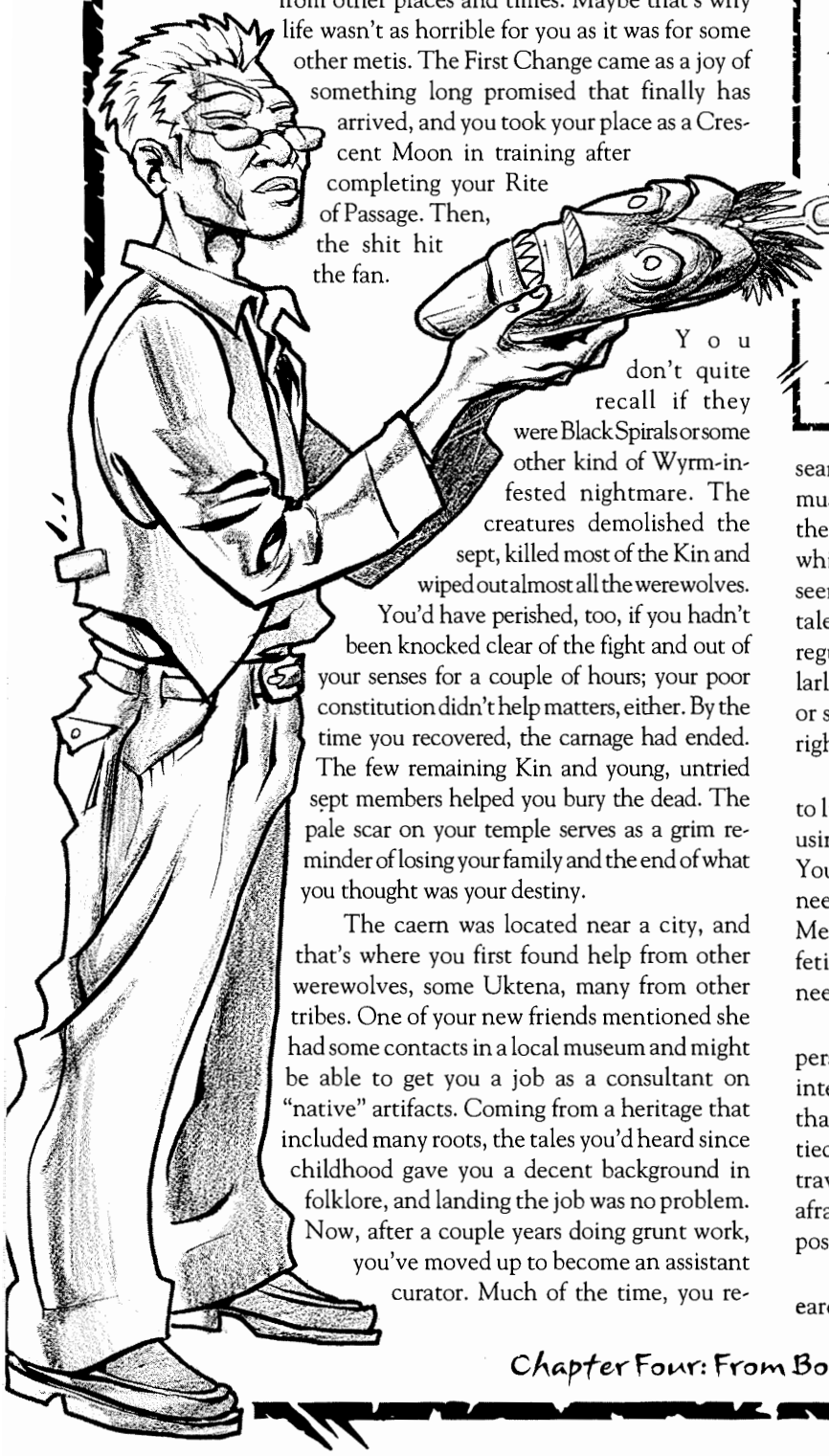
Tribal Weakness

INTENSE CURIOSITY

Museum Curator

Quote: *It's an excellent piece, and we'll be proud to have it in our collection. I will take personal responsibility for the cataloging and display.*

Prelude: Compared to some metis, you had a fairly easy upbringing. One of your parents remained close by and reared you near a tight-knit community of Kin and werewolves where hearing stories of ancestors and the past was almost a nightly event. Granted, you were always on the outskirts of the circle, but they still let you listen. Your relatives didn't ignore the strong connections you had with the spirits, either, and many times you spoke with voices from other places and times. Maybe that's why life wasn't as horrible for you as it was for some other metis. The First Change came as a joy of something long promised that finally has arrived, and you took your place as a Crescent Moon in training after completing your Rite of Passage. Then, the shit hit the fan.



You don't quite recall if they were Black Spirals or some other kind of Wyrm-infested nightmare. The creatures demolished the sept, killed most of the Kin and wiped out almost all the werewolves. You'd have perished, too, if you hadn't been knocked clear of the fight and out of your senses for a couple of hours; your poor constitution didn't help matters, either. By the time you recovered, the carnage had ended. The few remaining Kin and young, untried sept members helped you bury the dead. The pale scar on your temple serves as a grim reminder of losing your family and the end of what you thought was your destiny.

The caern was located near a city, and that's where you first found help from other werewolves, some Uktena, many from other tribes. One of your new friends mentioned she had some contacts in a local museum and might be able to get you a job as a consultant on "native" artifacts. Coming from a heritage that included many roots, the tales you'd heard since childhood gave you a decent background in folklore, and landing the job was no problem. Now, after a couple years doing grunt work, you've moved up to become an assistant curator. Much of the time, you research the origins of various artifacts that arrive at the museum from outside sources, though occasionally, you do the hunting yourself. The key part of your job is identifying which items could help the werewolves. More than once, a seemingly innocuous "bone dagger" has turned out to be a talen or fetish. You carefully catalog everything and make regular reports to the sept leader. No one thinks it's particularly odd that an item on exhibit is taken down for cleaning or sent away on tour, at least not if your name is on all the right paperwork.

Concept: While you grew up rural, you've had to adapt to life in the city. And while some werewolves would balk at using a car and other modern conveniences, it's not too bad. You can always go spend some time in the otherworlds, if you need a reminder of what you are and whom you serve. Meanwhile, your job is to make sure that powerful talens and fetishes don't fall into the wrong hands and, if used, serve the needs of Gaia.

Roleplaying Notes: You've got a relatively easygoing personality, especially for a metis, but an almost obsessive interest in tracking down the source and origin of artifacts that enter the museum. While many Crescent Moons are tied to their septs and caerns, you've got a great excuse to travel among both werewolves and humans. You're not afraid to go anywhere or do anything to get the most details possible about the relics that land on your desk.

Equipment: Precision cleaning brushes and tools, dog-eared notebook, four-wheel drive vehicle

UKTENA

Name:	Breed: **Metis**	Pack Name:
Player:	Auspice: **Theurge**	Pack Totem:
Chronicle:	Camp:	Concept: **Museum Curator**

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●○○○	Perception	●●●●○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●●●○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●○○○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●●○○	Animal Ken	●○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●●○○○
Brawl	●●○○○	Drive	●○○○○	Investigation	●○○○○
Dodge	●○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●●○○○	Melee	●●●○○	Occult	●○○○○
Primal-Urge	●●●○○	Performance	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●●○○○	Rituals	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●●○○○	Survival	●●○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Ancestors	●●○○○	Spirit Speech	
Contacts	●○○○○	Mother's Touch	
Kinfolk	●○○○○	Sense Wyrm	
Rites	●●●○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown	Rage	Health	
Glory ○○○○○○○○○○	●●●●●○○○○○	Bruised	☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	Hurt -1	☐
Honor ○○○○○○○○○○	Gnosis ●●●●●●○○○○	Injured -1	☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	Wounded -2	☐
Wisdom ●●●○○○○○○○	Willpower ●●●●●○○○○○	Mauled -2	☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐	Crippled -5	☐
Rank 1		Incapacitated	☐
		Tribal Weakness: INTENSE CURIOSITY	

Kinseeker

Quote: *My questions are meant to strengthen and to bond, never to harm, even if they seem strange to you.*

Prelude: It's uncommon that a lupus grows up in a sept of both wolves and humans, but that's where you came from, an isolated island off the Atlantic coast where your family could recall ancestors dating back to Africa and even pre-Columbian times. You had both two-legged and four-legged packmates from as early as you can remember, and when you went through the First Change, life didn't vary all that much. There were always routine tasks to do, such as guarding the caern, patrolling the bawn, attending the moots. Most folks figured you'd be a great sept leader some day, or at least have your own pack. But Gaia had other plans… .

Shortly after your Rite of Passage, you felt a yearning to leave the home you'd always known. It wasn't mere wanderlust; you looked around and saw the rich way of life your human Kin had, and you also saw it was slowly slipping away in the midst of encroaching resorts and modern amenities. Some locals were fighting hard to preserve the culture, with reasonable success. That got you to thinking about those outside your home. Were there other people who were losing their way of life, no thanks to greedy humans? You'd heard stories how once the Uktena chose their Kin only from Indians, but had later welcomed Africans, Hawai'ians and people of mixed ancestry. Were there others maybe that the tribe had overlooked? What about the hidden places of the world? Maybe still more forgotten and abandoned cultures needed to be brought into the tribe as Kin. You decided to make it your mission to find others who could be welcomed into Uktena's brood.

The reaction from your packmates was, of course, highly skeptical. Many felt you were wasting your skills as a mediator and judge by leaving the sept and venturing into the unknown. They respected your curiosity and desire for knowledge, but they all thought you were taking the wrong approach by wandering around looking for lost civilizations… or whatever you called what you were seeking, especially since you were born a wolf. Now you've got a dual mission — to find new potential Kinfolk *and* show everyone that a lupus can make it in the outside world.

Concept: You love living as a wolf, among your packmates. However, you are wise enough to know that this isn't the only path a werewolf can follow. The whole point of balance is living both as a wolf and a human; as a Half-Moon, this is quite clear to you. You have every intention of returning home some day to live with your family and Kin. Now, though, you have a quest to undertake. Maybe you'll find a new pack to aid you in the hunt.

Roleplaying Notes: Ask lots of questions, even if you repeat yourself. The whole reason why you're out wandering around is to find new potential Kinfolk, and you can't do that by being shy. Maybe you're a bit starry-eyed and idealistic, but you sincerely believe Gaia and Great Uktena have laid this destiny upon you.

Equipment: Knapsack, some tabloid newspapers, tattered maps

UKTENA™

Name:	Breed: **Lupus**	Pack Name:
Player:	Auspice: **Philodox**	Pack Totem:
Chronicle:	Camp:	Concept: **Kinseeker**

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●●○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●○○○
Dexterity	●●●●○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●○○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●●○○	Animal Ken	●●○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●●○○○
Brawl	●○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	●○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Leadership	●●○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●●○○○	Melee	●○○○○	Occult	●●○○○
Primal-Urge	●●●○○	Performance	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●●○○○	Rituals	●○○○○
Subterfuge	●●○○○	Survival	●●○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Ancestors	●○○○○	Heightened Senses	
Kinfolk	●○○○○	Resist Pain	
Mentor	●●●○○	Shroud	
Rites	●●●○○	Strut	
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Honor ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Wisdom ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Rank 1

Rage ●●●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Gnosis ●●●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower ●●●●●●○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised		□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

Tribal Weakness

INTENSE CURIOSITY

Wolf-way Singer

Quote: *My chants seem more effective if I slay evildoing spirits beforehand. Do you think that's cheating?*

Prelude: Growing up, you loved to sit at your grandfather's knee and listen to the stories of the old times, and you hoped to one day become a Singer — an expert at curing ceremonies — like him. Most youngsters carried portable CD players of the latest rock groups; you toted around recordings of your elders singing and telling stories. These were precious to you, as few Singers ever allowed themselves to be recorded.

When your family's sheep began to die, your grandfather said it was the work of skinwalkers, the witches who worked their evil magic from a nearby mesa. Armed with the bravery and ignorance of the young, you decided to put a stop to their wickedness.

You meant to surprise them, but they surprised you. Two grabbed you while the third one chanted as he leered at you with one malevolent eye. And you Changed with a roar, killed the two and ran down the third as he fled. But to your horror, the skinwalker spell did not fade. The rage you felt in the fight didn't go away, and when the waxing moon shone down on the land, the urge to take to four legs was overwhelming. Fearing for your life and shamed for letting this befall you, you went to your grandfather, explained what had happened, and begged for a ceremony to cure you. He only smiled.

Now you know the truth: the attack of the mockeries brought about your First Change. Your grandfather is Kinfolk, and your true mother lives at the sept on the other side of the rez. Now your true heritage is clear. But the heritage of your Kin is also your birthright, and so you continue to learn from your grandfather when you aren't learning the lore of the Uktena. You can see the Changer's ways hidden in the rituals of the Diné, and it makes you burn for more. You fairly race from mesa to canyon, for the old folks, the ones who heard the old stories, are dying off quicker than you can meet them. But they talk to you, for you've earned a reputation as a young but powerful Singer yourself. Your words soothe the weary, while you and your pack sweep away any evil spirits with claw and fetish.

Concept: You learn both the songs of the Uktena and those of your Kin; these bring comfort to the Diné and inspiration to the Uktena. You feel the whole point of your being here is to keep alive the stories of the past for future generations of Garou and Kin alike.

Roleplaying Notes: Be respectful of elders, both Garou and otherwise. Always listen carefully, for even incoherent mumbling may hide a truth. Educate the young, make them *want* to learn the old ways, for in the ancient traditions lies the path of harmony with the Mother.

Equipment: Jish bag, CDs and cassettes of old songs and stories

UKTENA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: **Homid**
Auspice: **Galliard**
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: **Wolf-way Singer**

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●●○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●○○○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●○○○	Appearance	●●●○○	Wits	●●○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Animal Ken	●○○○○	Computer	●○○○○
Athletics	●○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●○○○○
Brawl	●●○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Etiquette	●○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●○○○○
Expression	●●○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	●○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	●○○○○	Occult	●●●○○
Primal-Urge	●●○○○	Performance	●●○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Streetwise	●○○○○	Stealth	●○○○○	Rituals	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○	Survival	○○○○○	Tribal Lore	●○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Contacts	●●○○○	Persuasion	
Kinfolk	●●○○○	Spirit Speech	
Pure Breed	●○○○○	Mindspeak	
Rites	●●○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Honor ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wisdom ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Rank 1

Rage ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Gnosis ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Willpower ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Health

Bruised		☐
Hurt	-1	☐
Injured	-1	☐
Wounded	-2	☐
Mauled	-2	☐
Crippled	-5	☐
Incapacitated		☐

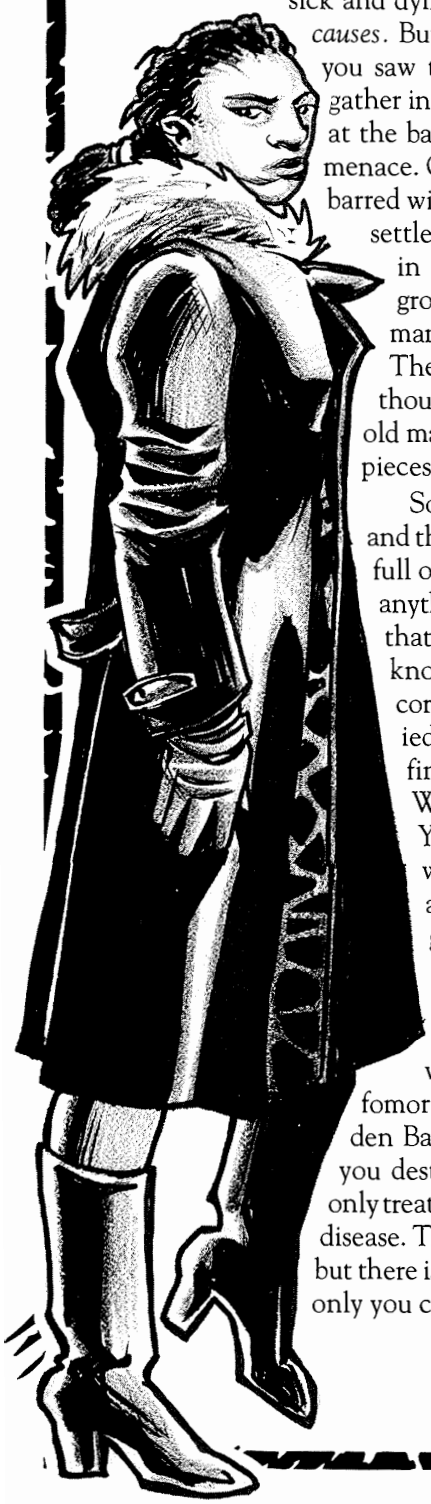
Tribal Weakness

INTENSE CURIOSITY

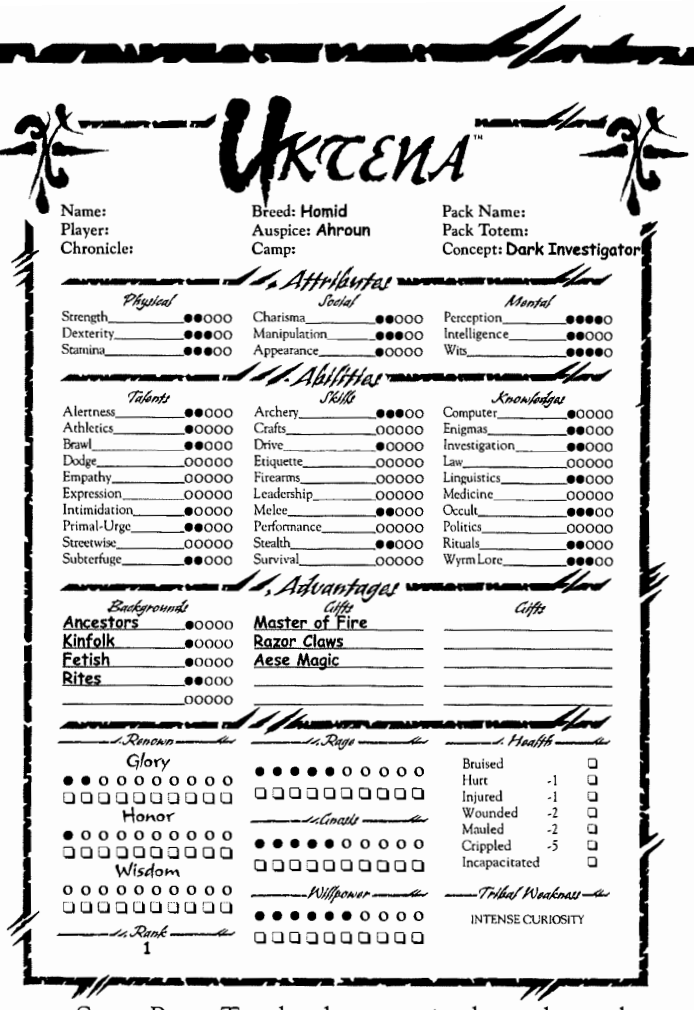
Dark Investigator

Quote: *You have a problem with what I've done? You've heard of the lesser of two evils, yes? Well, that would be me.*

Prelude: You had no true memory of your folks, though you dreamed about them often. All you knew about your parents was what you heard from the aunt who raised you — your father was a no-good, wicked devil and your mother was a fool for loving such a man. Even your persistent questions would get no more out of her, so you turned your curiosity to other things... like the fact that there were a lot of neighbors getting sick and dying. *Age*, they said. *Natural causes*. But you knew better, because you saw the Shadow. It seemed to gather in the corners of buildings, or at the base of trees, and you felt its menace. One evening you crept to a barred window and saw the Shadow settle around Old Man Roberts in his easy chair. You saw it grow heavy and thick, and the man went pale and wheezed. The world went strange, and though you couldn't save the old man, you tore the Shadow to pieces.



Soon, your tribe came for you, and they showed you the world is full of Shadows, evil worse than anything you could imagine. Evil that killed your parents. The knowledge shook you to the core; since then, you've studied diligently, determined to find out all you can about the Wyrm and all its servants. You listened to the elders when the other cubs tussled and goofed off. You read the gatekeeper's books of ancient mysteries when you thought he wasn't looking. Now the elders send you whenever they suspect fomori activity, mad cults or hidden Banes. You investigate, then you destroy, but you know you're only treating symptoms of the greater disease. The world is not a safe place, but there is power to drive evil away if only you can find and claim it.



UKTENA™

Name: | Breed: Homid | Pack Name:
Player: | Auspice: Ahroun | Pack Totem:
Chronicle: | Camp: | Concept: Dark Investigator

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●○○○	Perception	●●●●○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●○○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●○○○○	Wits	●●●●○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Archery	●●●○○	Computer	●○○○○
Athletics	●○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●●○○○
Brawl	●●○○○	Drive	●○○○○	Investigation	●●○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●●○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○	Melee	●●○○○	Occult	●●●○○
Primal-Urge	●●○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●●○○○	Rituals	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●●○○○	Survival	○○○○○	Wyrm Lore	●●●○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Ancestors	●○○○○	Master of Fire	
Kinfolk	●○○○○	Razor Claws	
Fetish	●○○○○	Aese Magic	
Rites	●●○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown: Glory ●●○○○○○○○○ / Honor ●○○○○○○○○○ / Wisdom ○○○○○○○○○○ — Rank 1

Rage ●●●●●○○○○○ — Gnosis ●●●●●○○○○○ — Willpower ●●●●●●○○○○

Health: Bruised ☐ / Hurt -1 ☐ / Injured -1 ☐ / Wounded -2 ☐ / Mauled -2 ☐ / Crippled -5 ☐ / Incapacitated ☐

Tribal Weakness: INTENSE CURIOSITY

Some Bane-Tenders have noticed you, but only time will reveal whether you are destined to be a great Wyrm-hunter or another Uktena consumed by the darkness.

Concept: You are driven to discover more about the Wyrm than is good for you, and you're starting to realize there's a price tag. The nightmares are more frequent, and your pack admonishes you for being too grim and strange. The fact that, gradually, you are moving beyond accepting to embracing what you are becoming frightens you — but not as much as it once did.

Roleplaying Notes: Your girlish charm has atrophied with disuse. People are fools to play dominance games and goof off when the heralds of the world's end wander through the spirit world every day. You see everything through a pall, and ironically the only solace is to delve more deeply into the horrible mysteries of Grandfather Snake.

Equipment: Notebook filled with transcribed passages and odd symbols, a Lovecraft paperback (for *light* entertainment), candles and other ritual materials, a few talens.

Uktena and Their Stories

The blood of the Uktena tribe has, over time, shown up in many different places. These warriors, sages, tricksters, mystics and lawgivers have all offered unique tales to the tribe. Some of the following Uktena are long dead, while others still have stories to tell and tasks to complete.

Tysoyaha, Sun Daughter

A distant relation to the well-known Half-Moon Spearcatcher, Tysoyaha was a Miccosukee No-Moon who likewise made a strong case for including freed slaves and other persons of African descent in the greater Uktena tribe. Her human Kin had a long history of pride and independent thinking, and the best of these traits appeared in Tysoyaha, Sun Daughter.

Descendents of the Creek, the Miccosukee eventually settled much of the southern regions of modern-day Florida, especially around the swamplands of the Everglades. This was certainly not by choice, as Wyrmbringers intent on relocating all Indian peoples to the west forced the Miccosukee out of the upper panhandle region at various periods in the early and mid 1800s. Only scant numbers of Miccosukee survived in the south, along with some of their Changing brothers and sisters. They had to make many changes in their lifestyle, the most difficult being the loss of their staple crop, yellow maize. Still, hunting was good. The Miccosukee recalled that in their creation stories, they had fallen from the heavens into a great lake. Changers like Tysoyaha wondered if in some way, they were not being returned to a place of beginnings, safe in the south from the Wyrmbringers.

The Miccosukee weren't the only ones to see the sub-tropical lands as a perfect place to remain hidden from Wyrmbringers. Over time, many slaves fled to the swamps; most were descended from African captives, sold into bondage and brought to the New World in chains. Some were of mixed blood, part white, part Indian, part African. Tysoyaha was among the first to welcome these new arrivals, and she eagerly listened to their stories of far away places and of cruelties that rivaled those done to her own people. But what most intrigued her were the tales of strange and wonderful Changing Peoples, who wore the fur of giant cats and even spider skins. Turning a deaf ear to the dubious words of her sept, Tysoyaha and her two packmates, Lokcha and Wewasicataw, begged for aid from their totem, Crocodile, to show them a path to the newcomer's ancestral home in Africa. And their totem found their plea to be so sincere, the next time they

journeyed into the spirit world, they saw a silver path open beside a long river.

The pack followed the path for many moons, until one night, the river dried up to a trickle. Tysoyaha and her friends emerged into a land they'd never seen, one as warm and sunny as their home, yet with trees, birds and stars that were not familiar. Not far away, they found a great river, much like the one they'd followed in the Umbra, and sitting on the bank was a dark-skinned woman with lanky limbs and bright eyes. Their tongues were different, but Lokcha was a Lawgiver, and she showed the stranger through her gestures and drawings on the riverbank that they came in peace. Wewasicataw was a Moon Dancer, and he sang a beautiful song to the stranger, telling of the pack's homeland far away. Finally, Tysoyaha played a flute carved from bone for the dark-skinned woman, and as the fast-beat song ended, the stranger changed.

Her hands and feet were covered in prickly hairs, and the fingers and toes stretched into eight limbs. The woman's forehead split open and her two eyes became many orbs of light. Before the pack was a spider, larger than the bears that roamed the swamps back home.

The spider didn't attack, but she began weaving between two nearby trees, and in her web was a story of how some of the Kin to the Changing People had fallen prey to the greed of other humans, wanting money from the fair-skinned people.

These Kin had been taken captive and sent no one knew where. In the web were pictures of large cats the pack had heard about, but there were many other creatures they'd never seen before. They understood from the spider's story that she believed the Kin had been stolen away to the pack's homeland. It was enough for Tysoyaha to see that there was indeed a link between the newcomers to the swamps and the Changing People of the spider's land. The pack gave her thanks and showed their own four-legged forms to the spider. Then, they left, retracing their footsteps on the long trek back to the swamp.

The sept eagerly welcomed the pack home, astonished at the tale Wewasicataw sang for them. He sang it again before a Great Council of Uktena, and Spearcatcher saw that Tysoyaha and her pack had given the tribe more than enough reason to welcome many of the refugee slaves as Kinfolk.

So while the battle of Spearcatcher and Yellow Fur is the one most Moon Dancers recall in the story of the Kin Debate, it is the strange journey of Tysoyaha, Sun Daughter, and her pack which first inspired her cousin to argue for bringing in new Kinfolk. As a No-Moon, she showed the Uktena a new way, welcoming strangers who suffered as much as the Pure Ones in their loss of home, freedom and family.

Auweke, Watcher of Water

Named after the so-called "big-eyed fish," the moana kali, Auweke was a Gibbous Moon born shortly before the takeover of the Hawai'ian islands by the United States in 1893. Legends say his mother was one of the first wolf-people to come to live among the Kanaka Maoli, the native people of Hawai'i, and that the Kinfolk man who fathered Auweke shared the royal blood of King Kamehameha III. Kamehameha III was the ruler who managed to convince the formidable British navy to leave the islands within a mere five months of their arrival in 1843, through means that still remain a mystery. In any case, the line of Auweke's father had been chosen to be Kin sometime after the Great Council welcomed certain other cultures and peoples to join the tribe. The birth of the boy Auweke came at a time when the Kanaka Maoli needed a sense of hope. They feared, as had the People of Turtle Island, that the *haole* would ruin their lands and lives.

Then, as now, werewolves were few in number in the islands. Auweke grew up in an isolated sept, despising the outsiders who destroyed the land with their sugar cane and pineapple fields. It wasn't about "race" or the color of someone's skin; for many years, the Kanaka Maoli had welcomed people who may have looked different, but still respected the islands in the same manner as they did. What angered Auweke and his septmates was the greed and disregard for the health of the land. By the time the Galliard underwent his First Change and Rite of Passage, the *haole* were making a fortune from sugar cane, rice, coffee and pineapple crops, with little if any profits and benefits being returned to the Kanaka Maoli. Queen Lili'uokalani had been under house arrest for almost a year before being released, and the U.S. government were the *de facto* rulers of the land. Auweke determined that he was going to do something about it.

The first efforts of the Moon Dancer and his packmates were small scale. They burned some scattered plantations and frightened off minor government officials. Then, they made bolder moves, destroying a few small military vessels off the coast of Oahu. At this point, a few werewolves from other tribes, such as the Glass Walkers, interceded. They tried to point out the benefits that had come to the islands and promised that given time, they'd help turn some of the profits back into preserving the land.

Maybe they were sincere, but the local werewolves didn't accept the offer. Auweke, his sept and his Kin grew bolder in their efforts and generally scorned the more peaceful avenues of change the Glass Walkers and Children of Gaia advocated.

Auweke's ultimate fate remains a mystery. He'd left his packmates to meet with one of the Wyrmcomer Changers, promising to return with hope of a truce that would clearly mark a change for the better, but he declined to tell anyone the details. Two days later, a sept member found the Moon Dancer's body on the beach at low tide. Three silver-tipped arrows pierced Auweke's flesh, one through each eye, the third through his throat. All efforts by his pack and sept to find out where the meeting was held and what treachery had befallen their brother failed; they could find no clues, either mystical or mundane.

Three generations have passed since Watcher of Water's death, and still, no new information has surfaced. But with the growth of the Hawai'ian independence movement led by the humans, the small werewolf population of the islands hopes they'll finally find the truth. One of Auweke's great-great granddaughters, a Crescent Moon called Kalea, Seeker of Deep Places, is on friendly terms with a few Stargazers who live in Hawai'i. She knows they have resources and contacts well beyond her own and hopes they'll assist her tribe in solving one of its most bitter mysteries.

Fanoun, Dyes-the-Wyrm-in-Blood

The life of the Warrior woman named Dyes-the-Wyrm-in-Blood was short, but glorious. She was a Path Dancer born to the Choctaw people, but some Talesingers say her ancestors also came from the early Cajun people of the Louisiana swamps, pointing to her bright hazel eyes as evidence of her mixed heritage. Whatever her origin, Fanoun took first blood from the Wyrm's minions while still a young cub, living in the home of her Kinfolk mother on the Choctaw reservation in the deep South. Life wasn't easy for the family, but Fanoun learned much of the old ways from her Kin and was ready to defend them when a fomori sought to steal away one of her young siblings. Fanoun, not even a decade old, gutted the man with a butcher knife and hid his body deep in the earth. The Uktena sept who had been watching her brought Fanoun into their midst soon after. Successful in her Rite of Passage, where she undertook an Umbral quest to slay four Wyrm creatures with nothing but her own claws, the Warrior returned home and prepared to join the sept as a Guardian, intent on protecting her caern with her life if needed. Fate had other plans.

Less than a year passed when a stranger came to the sept. He gave his name as Speaks to the Smoke and told Fanoun that she had been chosen to serve the Path Dancers; Uktena had sent him a dream from the mists beyond the world to show him where to find her. Fanoun was respectful, but skeptical. She asked to know more of Speaks to the Smoke's tale, but his oath to Uktena had bound him to silence unless she agreed to follow him. She did, and her sept heard nothing from her until six seasons had passed. The Warrior woman returned, looking even more formidable and bearing new scars, several mysterious tattoos and a klaive that seemed to glint with dried blood. Fanoun had obviously been dutiful, but she seemed troubled now, too. Without giving any story of where she had been or what she had done, Fanoun told her former septmates she'd come home to begin a ritual of wisdom and learn what her next task would be.

So the sept helped her gather clean wood for a fire, as she asked. The Kinfolk women, renowned as weavers of baskets and reeds, mixed rich dyes of red, blue and purple. Fanoun immersed her hands in the still-

boiling liquid, not even flinching in pain. She breathed in a mixture of roses and pepper that the Kin sprinkled on the fire. And she rubbed into her skin a balm of hemlock, monkshood, mistletoe and poplar before wandering slowly into the cypress grove nearby.

Fanoun entered the world of dreams. She saw the sun move across tall orange cliffs, dyeing them purple in the sunset. In the fading light, a pool opened at her feet, and a man hoisted himself onto the shore. The full moon shone on his naked skin and in his eyes were stars that shone bright as he watched her. He was a ghost, she thought, but the look he gave her was one of desire and longing. And as dawn approached, and the vision faded, Fanoun heard the cries of a child, newborn and furious, full of hunger and rage, before the croaking sounds of the swamp returned.

"What must I do?" she cried out to Great Uktena, confused and angry. "I wish to serve my tribe. I have never fled from battle and duty, even with wounds that bled as a river in spring. And now, must I leave my people to go with this unknown Kin who desires me and bear his child? Is *that* what my vision means? Give me proof!"

With barely a whisper, a snake fell into her lap from the great cypress above. It was a water moccasin, and it slithered quickly into the water. So Fanoun returned to her sept and within three years, had honorably mated and borne a daughter that the Medicine Woman said would be a great and powerful leader. Fanoun left her daughter when she was barely old enough to walk, and again took up her duties as a Path Dancer.

The Warrior's end came not fighting the Wyrm she had opposed all her life, but in the city, against Grandfather Spider's brood. She was meeting with some Kinfolk with a sorcerous bent when they were ambushed by a group of people who commanded many Weaver magics. She held them off until the surviving Kin could escape, but when she dragged her badly wounded body across the Gauntlet, her last sight was a cluster of war-spiders bearing down on her. One of the fleeing Kin heard her final war cry and carried her end story back to her people. From the moot honoring her memory, Dyes-the-Wyrm-in-Blood's tale spread as one of an Uktena deeply connected to the mystic threads that tug at the lives of all Garou.

Adoni Starfire

Adoni Starfire is an Aranda aboriginal elder of the Sept of the Waking Dream in Australia. For all that he's a hairless metis, he's gained widespread recognition as a gifted Shaman whose knowledge of the Umbra and the Dreamtime probably exceeds any

werewolf living. Adoni often insists, to those who question him, that he lives within *altjiranga ngambakala*, which sometimes can mean the Dreamtime but also refers to "one's own eternity." He likes to explain the Dreamtime as part of the mythic age, where eternal heroes who are part of the land never die. It's simultaneously a body of rules for living in the present and future, with connections to people, places and things of the past. Adoni makes constant connections between the past, present and future in his stories, and switches tenses in ways that usually make no sense to non-aborigines. Among Shamans, he is revered for his accomplished Rite of Invitation to the Ancestors, a moving ceremony that welcomes an ancestor to return in the body of a living werewolf host.

Adoni grew up in the sept, but no outsiders know much about his parentage or origins. In human form, he's a small, dark-skinned bald man with large brown eyes; as a wolf, he's got leathery skin with no hair. His advanced age is apparent in all his forms; for a human, he's old, but for a werewolf, he's practically ancient. Adoni has no interest whatsoever in the Jindabyne Council and believes they are generally clueless about

the needs of the Australian Garou. Though he mourns deeply the loss of the Bunyip, he thinks it's best to honor them and let their spirits rest rather than try to force their return. Still, he has been intrigued by the rebirth of Nglayod, the Rainbow Serpent, totem of the Bunyip, and is eager to see it strengthen and grow. If the Jindabyne Council wants to do something about helping the spirit, Adoni believes they should quit all their organizing talk and go help the totem *now*, before any more days pass.

The Shaman is not unfriendly, but he is cautious about trusting others. His only strong friendship outside of those in his sept is with the eccentric Child of Gaia, Innana, Voice of the Goddess. He respects her insights and often talks with her about what she has seen. Innana has shared with him what she believes to be the possible end of the Children of Gaia, based upon a series of dreams and visions. And recently, she told her friend of a terrible nightmare. In her dream, she felt her body being devoured by thylacines that bore sigils of the Bunyip, yet the creatures also bore visible taints of Grandfather Spider. Neither Innana nor Adoni have any idea what the Child of Gaia geneticist Cernounos has actually accomplished with "re-creating" the thylacine. If Adoni should ever discover the truth, he would likely not hesitate to slay the tainted creatures and see some sort of punishment or censure imposed on Cernounos.

Josh Creek

Josh Creek, called Stoneheart, is the leading Warrior of the Roadrunner Sept in northwest Arizona, and a stalwart leader in both peace and war. For someone supposed to be the ultimate warrior, he has a lot of sense and a surprisingly cool head, and his pack has more than once appreciated the skills of his Kinfolk wife, Rosie, who is a doctor of osteopathy. Josh carries an ancient klaive (actually, a *macauitl*, five feet long and four inches wide) with a hilt made from hardwood and a silver blade inset with obsidian Aztec-Tanoan symbols. He's a tall, husky man with long black hair and piercing hazel eyes. In wolf form, the Ahroun is black with a slight fringe of silver at his temple. He bears a hairless scar across his abdomen in all forms.

Josh grew up in the sept and had the tutelage of an older Warrior, Joseph Holt. When Joseph was killed in a run-in with Pentex, Josh took it hard; he'd tried to save his mentor only to end up half-gutted himself. Joseph's widow, much younger than her dead husband, was Rosie. She healed Josh physically and spiritually, and after a long period of mourning, married him with the approval of the sept and Kinfolk.

The *macauitl* Josh carries may be centuries old. He and his packmates found it deep in the Echo Cliffs, along with what appears to be the remains of a lost Aztec colony, far from where scholars would ever expect Aztecs to have been. In addition to the *macauitl*, Josh and the pack found a set of scrolls, which may predate the so-called *Florentine Codex*, a series of writings about the Aztecs compiled by the Spanish friar Bernardino de Sahagún in the early sixteenth century. The language appears to be a dialect of the Aztec Náhuatl, but Josh and his sept mates have only translated bits and pieces of the scrolls. Even with a pile of dictionaries, several rites and not a few Gifts, it's been a difficult task because the language is as much metaphor and riddle as straight narrative. Josh is torn; his Warrior's heart burns to thoroughly ransack the ruins, hoping to find out who really lived there and what they were doing. The more calculating part of his spirit keeps him cautious and deliberate in investigating the ruins. He knows there's no telling who (or what) may have lived there... nor why the former inhabitants made such a hasty exit. Josh is considering the merits of discussing the ruins at an upcoming Great Council and possibly asking for some help from Uktena outside the southwest.

Rocío Parts-the-Water

Rocío Parts-the-Water is a young Half-Moon who spends most of her time in and around the long border between Mexico and Texas. She hails from a small sept near Big Bend National Park, but seldom resides there long. Rocío is the daughter of an Uktena Ahroun from central Mexico and a Kinfolk father from Texas, and when she Changed at the age of 13, she knew exactly what she wanted to do: Become a Scout and travel for the tribe. In her time, she's been to many septs, spoken with several Fera and even made friends with a few "outsiders," namely some human shamans interested in the magic of her mother's ancient Toltec ancestors. She hopes that the Balaam and the Garou can repair the old rift in their friendship, but she doesn't see it happening soon.

Rocío is a natural at making lasting friends, even if she seems a little crusty on first meeting. For an Uktena, she's remarkably open and talkative, and thus innately gains people's trust. While she usually speaks English in a twangy, folksy manner, she also can converse in fluent Spanish, either formally or in the Mexican vernacular. Rocío enjoys teaching the young, and is considering whether or not it's time to settle down and help lead the sept, rather than being an emissary at large. A recent battle in the Amazon laid her up for weeks and gave her time to think things over more deeply.

The Half-Moon's closest relative is her aged Kinfolk aunt Luisa. The older woman has a knack for telling fortunes, and she has told Rocío that her future "lies in the peace between old foes." The Philodox has no idea if this means she should help negotiations between the Fera and the Garou, the Pure Ones and the Wyrmcomers or something else entirely.

Rocío appears to be about 30 years old, and has a rangy, well-muscled body. Her dark hair has red highlights and hangs about shoulder length. Her most prominent feature is her hooked nose; rather than being unattractive, it lends an air of strength to her face, offsetting her large brown eyes. The Half-Moon usually wears casual, loose-fitting cotton clothes and sandals.

Amy Hundred-Voices

Amy Hundred-Voices is a bit of an oddity, even among the Uktena. Now in her early-twenties, she underwent her First Change during her mid-teens. Amy is a Songkeeper, but one who's still working hard at telling stories about the vast lore she collects. In fact, Amy has a reputation among the tribe for being a rather *lackluster* taleteller. Her greatest gift, as her name implies, is linguistics; Amy speaks a wide array of different languages and dialects. These include Italian, Aramaic, Greek, French, Hopi, Inuit, Portuguese and Russian. She's also a bit unusual for a werewolf in that she's completed a couple of college degrees, in the areas of Native American studies and occidental culture. Amy also knows a great deal about the Hisatsinom, whom the Diné called Anasazi. A few elders believe this knowledge will be immensely useful as the End Times near.

Amy carries a fetish bow, and she's an accomplished archer, even though she's highly self-critical. She's also got a knack for hand-to-hand fighting, moving with deliberation and speed in combat. Despite their negative comments on her stories, her packmates Claws with Teeth and Chottle are fond of Amy, and she of them. The three form an odd group, in that they're all misfits in their own way. Their most recent concern is the destruction of the Wendigo Greyrock Sept, which had grudgingly cared for the metis Chottle.

Recently, Amy has recognized her totem as Chimera, the many who is one. She wonders if Chimera's nature, a creature that likes to hide truth beneath masks and deceptions, is partly why her own tribe is a

bit uncomfortable in her presence. Does her connection to Chimera imply that she herself is not what she seems? As Chimera is the totem of the Stargazers, Amy also wonders if her future may be entwined with that tribe as well as her own.

Image: Amy shows the best features of her Vietnamese, African and Jewish heritage. Her hair is straight and black, worn in two tails. Her almond-shaped eyes are a deep brown, and her nose is prominent, giving her an intense expression. She's of average height and weight, with a well-muscled body. Amy usually wears rugged hiking or outdoor clothing in neutral shades, but she also wears a worn leather medicine bag, along with the occasional scarf or sash in bright Kente patterned cloth of blue, orange, purple or gold. She's never without her bow and a stash of arrows. Other than occasional beads in her hair or on her clothing, Amy forgoes jewelry. Her main hobbies are reading, sewing and backstrap weaving.

Roleplaying Notes: Amy seemingly lacks a strong sense of righteous anger, which is certainly unusual for any werewolf, much less a Gibbous Moon. She wants to be a nurturing sort of werewolf, one who cultivates lore, song, and secrets, much as a gardener mothers her tender plants. Unfortunately, Amy tends to stumble a great deal in her searches for new wisdom. The fact that some elders are impatient with her doesn't boost her confidence; often, she'll think she's done something of note only to hear nothing but scorn and criticism. Though she tries to keep a sense of optimism, Amy carries a great emotional weight on her young shoulders, leading to some wild theories among fellow Uktena. Some suspect she is near Harano; others postulate that she has some Croatan blood in her veins. Whatever the case, Amy believes she has a purpose to fulfill; it's just that Gaia hasn't revealed it yet.

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Galliard

Rank: 2 (*fostern*)

Physical: Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 3 (3/4/5/5), Stamina 3 (5/6/6/5)

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2)

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Expression 1, Intimidation 1, Primal-Urge 1

Skills: Crafts 1, Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Melee 2, Performance 1, Survival 1, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Investigation 1, Linguistics 5, Occult 3, Politics 1, Rituals 1

Backgrounds: Fetish 3, Kinfolk 1, Totem 2

Rage: 4; **Gnosis**: 3; **Willpower**: 5

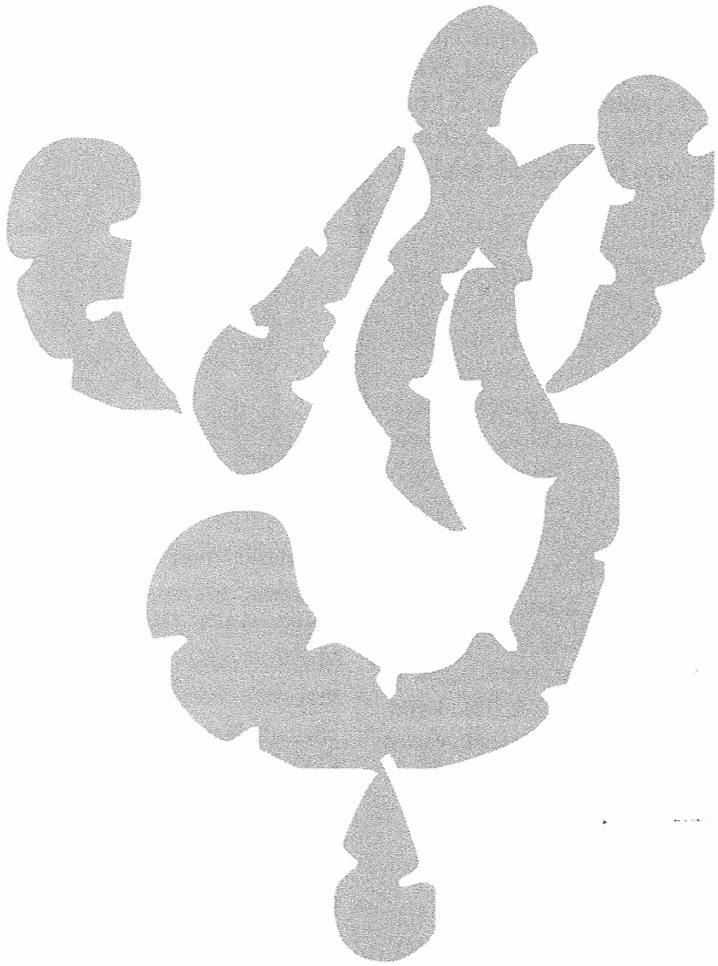
Gifts: (1) Persuasion, Mindspeak, Sense Magic; (2) Distractions, Overlook, Staredown

Rites: Rite of the Questing Stone

Fetishes: Moon Bow (Level 3)

Authors' Dedication

To all those who seek for elusive answers and undiscovered secrets, wherever their paths may lead; to the crew of the space shuttle *Columbia*, in memory of their explorations and sacrifice.



Uktena™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed:
Auspice:
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept:

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●○○○○	Charisma	●○○○○	Perception	●○○○○
Dexterity	●○○○○	Manipulation	●○○○○	Intelligence	●○○○○
Stamina	●○○○○	Appearance	●○○○○	Wits	●○○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	○○○○○	Animal Ken	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Primal-Urge	○○○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	○○○○○	Rituals	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Survival	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
	○○○○○		
	○○○○○		
	○○○○○		
	○○○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Honor
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Wisdom
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Rank

Rage

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Gnosis

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Willpower

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Health

Bruised		❑
Hurt	-1	❑
Injured	-1	❑
Wounded	-2	❑
Mauled	-2	❑
Crippled	-5	❑
Incapacitated		❑

Tribal Weakness

INTENSE CURIOSITY

Uktena™

Homid	Glabro	Crinos	Hispo	Lupus
No Change	Strength (+2)____	Strength (+4)____	Strength (+3)____	Strength (+1)____
	Stamina (+2)____	Dexterity (+1)____	Dexterity (+2)____	Dexterity (+2)____
	Appearance (-1)____	Stamina (+3)____	Stamina (+3)____	Stamina (+2)____
	Manipulation (-2)____	Appearance 0	Manipulation (-3)____	Manipulation (-3)____
		Manipulation (-3)____	+1 Die to Bite Damage	-2 Perception Diff.
Difficulty: 6	Difficulty: 7	Difficulty: 6	Difficulty: 7	Difficulty: 6

INCITE DELIRIUM IN HUMANS

Other Traits

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Fetishes

Item:_____ Level____ Gnosis____
Power:_____
Item:_____ Level____ Gnosis____
Power:_____
Item:_____ Level____ Gnosis____
Power:_____
Item:_____ Level____ Gnosis____
Power:_____

Rites

_____
_____
_____
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_____

Combat

Maneuver/Weapon	Roll	Difficulty	Damage	Range	Rate	Clip

Brawling Chart

Maneuver	Roll	Diff	Damage
Bite	Dex+Brawl	5	Strength+1/A
Body Tackle	Dex+Brawl	7	Special/B
Claw	Dex+Brawl	6	Strength+1/A
Grapple	Dex+Brawl	6	Strength/B
Kick	Dex+Brawl	7	Strength+1/B
Punch	Dex+Brawl	6	Strength/B

A=Aggravated Damage
B=Bashing Damage

Armor:_____

Uktena™

Nature: **Demeanor:**

Merits & Flaws

Merit	Type	Cost	Flaw	Type	Bonus

Expanded Background

Allies

Mentor

Ancestors

Pure Breed

Contacts

Resources

Kinfolk

Totem

Possessions

Gear (Carried):

Equipment (Owned):

Sept

Name:

Caern Location:

Level: Type:

Totem:

Leader:

Experience

TOTAL:

Gained From:

TOTAL SPENT:

Spent On:

Uktena™

History

Prelude

Description

Age:

Hair:

Eyes:

Race:

Nationality:

Sex:

	Height	Weight
Homid:		
Glabro:		
Crinos:		
Hispo:		
Lupus:		

Battle Scars:

Metis Deformity:

Visuals

Pack Chart

Character Sketch

TRIBEBOOK: UKTENA™

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